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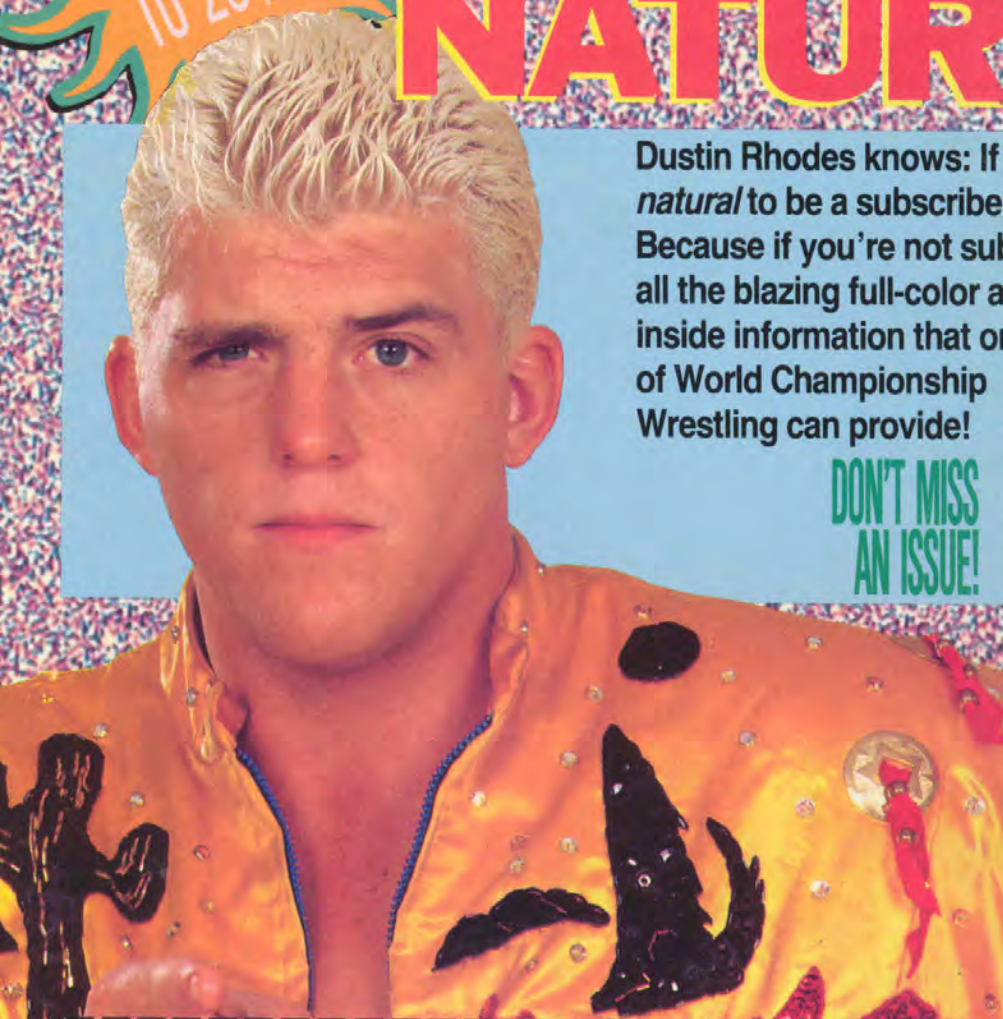
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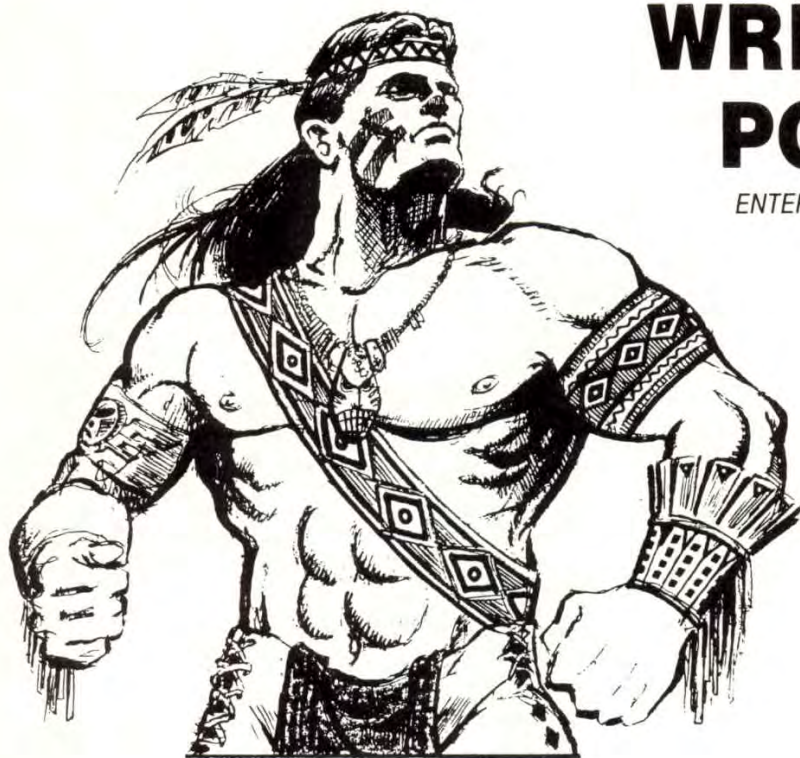
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JUNE 1993

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Having won seven NWA World titles as a wrestler and three more as a manager, Harley Race knows a bit about winning. But what does he know about handling a 450-pound juggernaut of destruction?

40 RIC FLAIR'S HELLISH HOMECOMING: WHY ALL OF WCW WANTS TO DESTROY THE "NATURE BOY"

After 18 months in the WWF, Ric Flair is coming home. But he may not be welcome. Find out why the nine-time world champion is on the hit list of every WCW wrestler!

44 MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL ... ONE OF THESE MEN IS DUE FOR A FALL

It's ego a go-go in the WWF, where Lex Luger, Curt Hennig, Shawn Michaels, and Razor Ramon each believe that he is God's gift to wrestling. There's no shortage of confidence, but is this a confidence game? And if it is, who's the big loser?

48 THE "NEW" KAMALA: HUMAN ENOUGH TO BE CHAMPION?

Since Slick has sided with the Ugandan savage, Kamala has expressed a kinder, gentler demeanor. If he can combine this newfound sanity with his massive girth and skills, he could be wearing hardware instead of a loincloth

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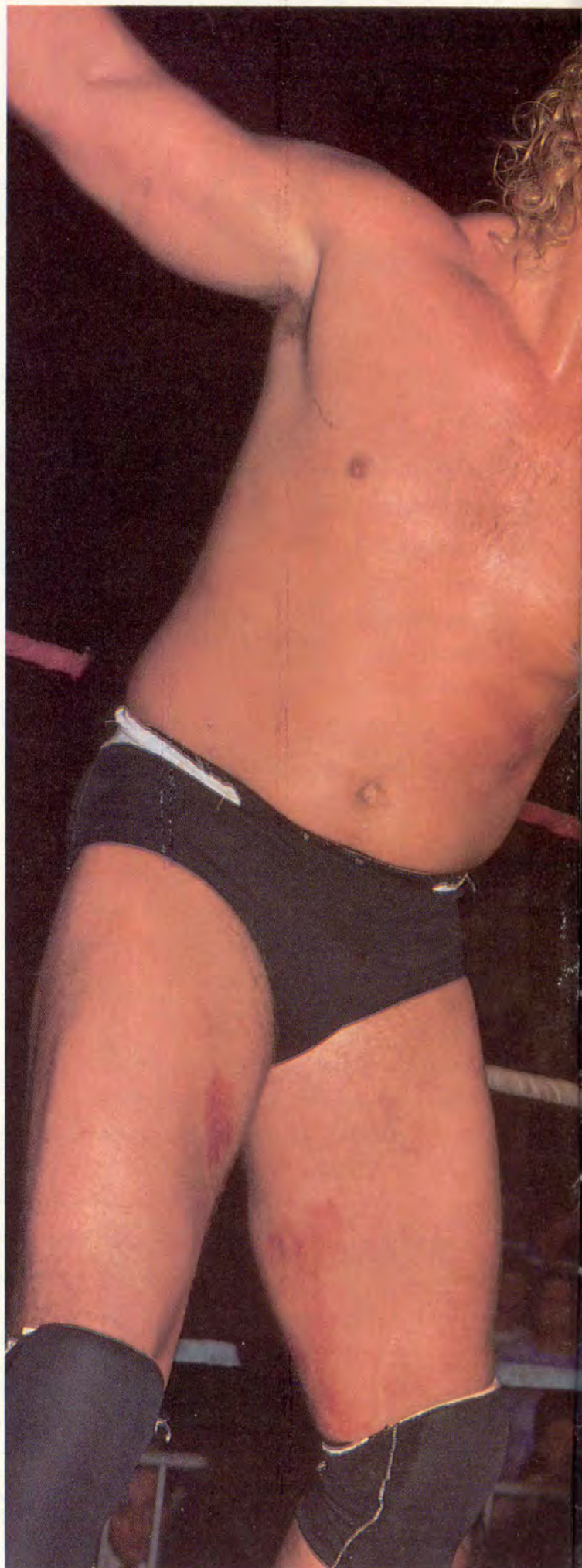
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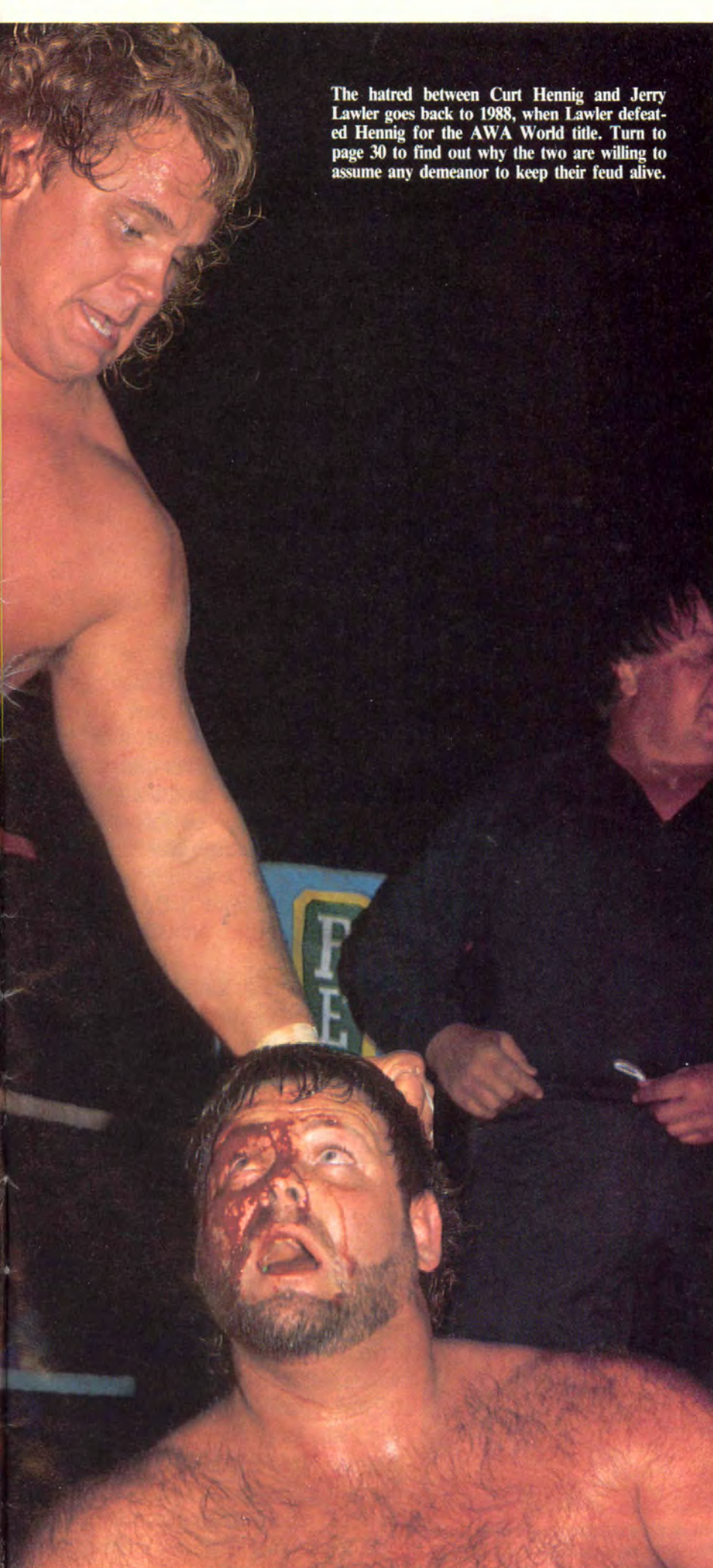
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Bret Hart shows Yokozuna the ropes





The hatred between Curt Hennig and Jerry Lawler goes back to 1988, when Lawler defeated Hennig for the AWA World title. Turn to page 30 to find out why the two are willing to assume any demeanor to keep their feud alive.

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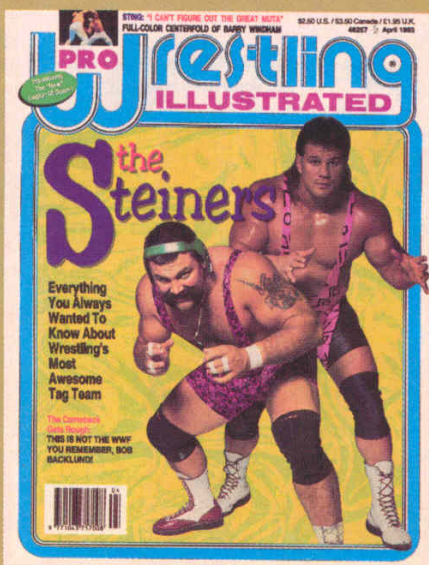
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HONORING ANDRE

I was very saddened by the news of Andre the Giant's death, which took place on January 27, just days after he attended his father's funeral in his native France.

I consider myself fortunate to have grown up watching Andre during the midway mark of his career. He was truly the first giant of pro wrestling. Late in his career, Andre became slow and immobile, but continued to wrestle until the very end. But I'll always re-

member the smiling giant who was in his prime in the late-'70s, the man who had unforgettable battles against Kamala, Masked Superstar, King Kong Bundy, and John Studd.

May his spirit rest, and his legend be remembered.

TONY KARANTONIS
Willow Street, PA

I couldn't believe the news when I first heard it. I'll also never forget the first time I saw Andre. He simply amazed me with his ring presence, and his classic battles against John Studd and Hulk Hogan will never be forgotten.

Goodbye, Andre. We will never forget you.

DALE FURR
Clinton, MS

Andre was a kind-hearted person outside the ring. I occasionally spoke with him after his matches. Even when Andre wrestled Hulk Hogan at WrestleMania III, I backed Andre 100 percent.

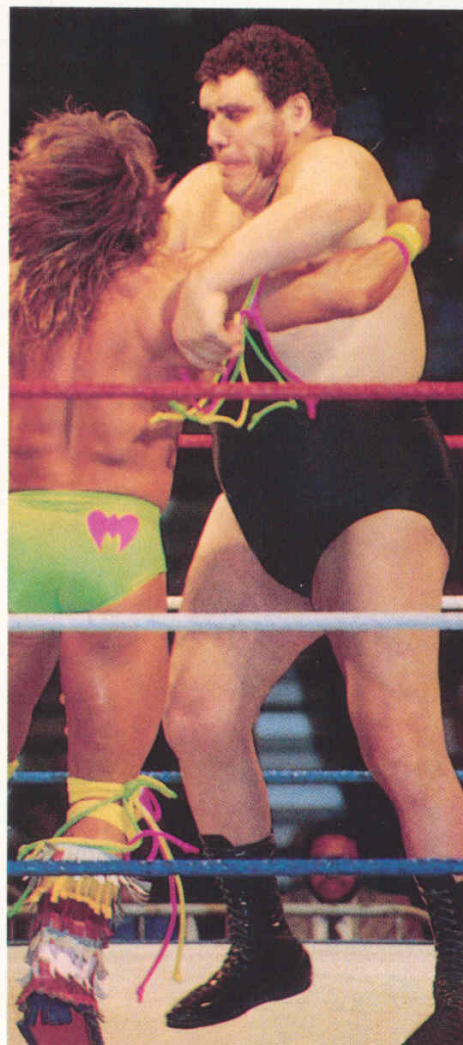
To me, Andre will always be the greatest wrestler ever to step in the ring.

CASEY OXENDINE
Kingsport, TN

CURT RESPONSE

In the April 1993 issue, there was a letter by Timmy Cherruowq ("Turn, Turn, Turn") stating that Ric Flair, Razor Ramon, and Bobby Heenan are going to make Curt Hennig look like a perfect loser. I couldn't disagree more.

If Flair and Ramon were the



The recent death of Andre the Giant saddened many fans, including reader Tony Karantonis.

STUNNING STEINERS

The cover story of our April 1993 issue, "The Steiners: Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Wrestling's Most Awesome Tag Team," brought a deluge of responses from admirers of the Michigan brother tandem.

"Rick and Scott are the greatest team of all-time, and truly deserving of the great feature," wrote Tim Hollis of Queens, New York. "I've never seen more exciting wrestling stars than these men, and your wealth of facts and figures truly did them justice. They're the best!"

Another reader, however, was not so impressed with the feature.

"More typical **PWI** blather," wrote John Sorenson of Boston. "Instead of real inside stuff, like the details of the auto accident that made Rick a bit loony a few years ago, we get close-up photos of Rick's tattoos, as well as a bunch of lame title change info. We wrestling fans demand more than gloss!"



Ric Flair and Razor Ramon claimed to be the perfect team, but they were unable to win the main event at Survivor Series and, points out reader Tom Efker, neither man could beat Curt Hennig.

"perfect team," why didn't they win the main event of the Survivor Series against Randy Savage and Hennig? They had the perfect opportunity to embarrass two of their biggest enemies. Instead, Flair and Ramon got themselves disqualified, making themselves look desperate.

Second, Hennig joined an elite club by becoming one of the few men to cleanly pin Flair—and in a loser-leaves-WWF match on national television at that. Hennig is the only wrestler, to my knowledge, who can say he was personally responsible for running Flair out of a federation.

So as Ramon and Lex Luger gear up to try to destroy Hennig, they should look at what's gone on the past few months. Whoooo *that*, Timmy!

TOM EFKER
Middletown, OH

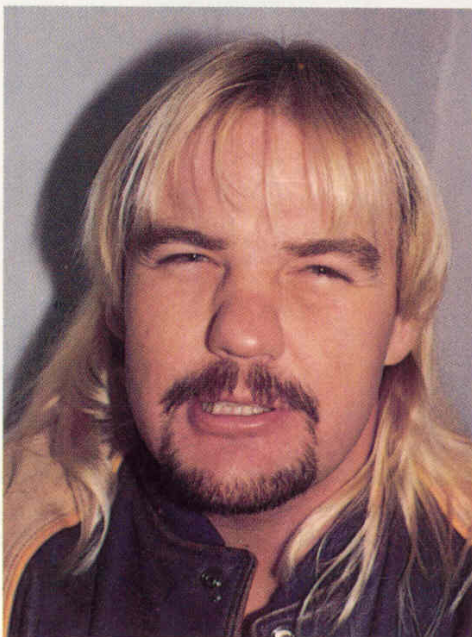
CENTERFOLD SORROWS

If I was Barry Windham, I would go down to the *PWI* offices and crack a few heads Why should he

do this? It's because of the nickname you guys gave him on the April 1993 *PWI* centerfold: "Texas Turncoat"!

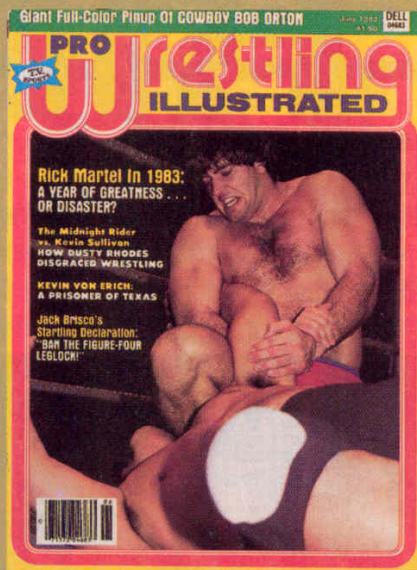
The nickname that follows the wrestler's name is usually something positive, regardless of the wrestler. I don't think "Texas Turncoat" is very positive. I'd start looking over my shoulder if I was

(Continued on page 50)



We should not have labeled Barry Windham a "Texas turncoat," says reader K.C. Darkharte.

10 YEARS AGO IN PWI



The cover of the June 1983 featured a sensational then-scientific star, and posed this question: "Rick Martel In 1983: A Year Of Greatness ... Or Disaster?" Martel had emerged as the top contender for Nick Bockwinkel's AWA World title, but Bockwinkel was doing everything he could to avoid the challenge of the Canadian star. Martel finally won the belt from Jumbo Tsuruta in 1984 after the Japanese master downed Bockwinkel.

The centerfold featured "Cowboy" Bob Orton, one of the few wrestlers to emerge as a major star in all three major federations. At the time, Orton was competing in several states after failing to wrestle the WWF World title from Bob Backlund. Previously managed by The Grand Wizard, the son of legendary Bob Orton Sr. went on to become famous as a bodyguard for both Roddy Piper and Adrian Adonis.

Elsewhere in the magazine: Instead of leaving Florida after dropping a loser-leaves-Florida match, Dusty Rhodes adopted the guise of The Midnight Rider and continued to compete. We declared the maneuver a disgrace ... Former NWA World champion Jack Brisco shocked his fans by insisting that the figure-four leglock—his favorite finisher—be banned ... Pedro Morales discussed his Intercontinental title loss to Don Muraco with Stu Saks in "Dressing Room Confidential" ... Matt Brock looked at "Sheik" Crusher Blackwell.

RINGSIDE

With Bill Apter



Smoky Mountain tag team champions Jim Cornette and The Heavenly Bodies have stormed into WCW, continuing their feud with The Rock 'n' Roll Express. Cornette has also signed Bobby Eaton.

IN A FEDERATION that boasts many exciting newcomers, it continues to be the "old guard" that's making the headlines in WCW. The

feud between **The Rock 'n' Roll Express** and **Jim Cornette's Heavenly Bodies** has now spilled out of the Smoky Mountain territory and into

WCW main events.

This controversy started when WCW Executive Vice President **Bill Watts** (who since has left the organization) brought **Rick Morton** and **Robert Gibson** back to WCW, billed as the Smoky Mountain tag team champions. Naturally this incensed Cornette, since **Tom Prichard** and **Stan Lane** were the rightful titleholders at the time.

"Watts obviously is as dim as he's ever been," said Cornette in one of the few printable comments we could report. "Hey, if they want to use false advertising to sell tickets, don't expect **Bobby Eaton**, Stan, Tommy, and me to set back and let 'em get away with it. The Bodies are the finest team in the sport—and now we're in WCW to prove it!"

Thus far, the bouts between the Express and the Bodies have been total wars—particularly the impromptu bout between the teams that was televised from the Center Stage Theater in Atlanta. The matches have been marred not only by outside interference by a tennis racket-swinging Cornette, but by Eaton, who has become the official enforcer for the Bodies.

"Something's got to be done about Cornette and Eaton," said Gibson, holding his head after Eaton blasted him with the racket, which led to a disqualification win for the Express.

Well, if anything is done, it's not going to be done by Watts. Watts, as I mentioned earlier, has left WCW after an eight-month stint as executive VP. Watts will be replaced by **Ole Anderson**, as WCW makes its third



Harvey Wippleman has managerial control of the WWF's most awesome specimen, Giant Gonzales. Wippleman has had trouble arranging matches for the frightening 7'7" behemoth.

top management change in the past two years.

As mentioned earlier, several young stars are making big impres-

sions in WCW, including kickboxing master **Robbie Vee**, former IWCCW junior heavyweight champion **The Tasmaniac**, huge former CWA

champion **Maxx Payne**, Florida maulers **The Wrecking Crew**, and 7' **Big Sky**, the tallest man in the federation since **El Gigante**.

Speaking of Gigante, the 7'7" monster, now known as **Giant Gonzales** in the WWF, has made the conversion to rulebreaker and is among the most feared men in the sport. In fact, manager **Harvey Wippleman** is having trouble finding men brave enough to take on the vicious behemoth.

"That's why you haven't been seeing all that much of Gonzales at arena cards," a WWF source confirmed. "It's not just young guys who don't want to face him. You'd be surprised at the veteran stars who want nothing to do with a guy that big. It's amazing, really. El Gigante was lightly regarded, but Giant Gonzales terrifies everyone. What a transformation!"

There are several title transformations to report this month. **The "New" Moondogs**, which now consists of veteran **Spot** and huge 360-pound **Splat**, won the USWA tag team title from **Ron** and **Don Harris** on February 1 at the Mid-South Coliseum in Memphis . . . **Lucifer the Knight of the Road** (a name that will **never** fit in our ratings!) defeated **Max Thrasher** to win the Mid-Eastern Wrestling Federation heavyweight title on February 6 in Gaithersburg, Maryland . . . **The Bad Breed**, former UIW champion **Axl Rotten** and his younger brother, **Ian**, shocked Global fans by winning the tag team title from popular **John Hawk** and **Bob Duncum Jr.** on January 29 in Dallas.

Randy Savage and **Sensational Sherri** together again? As hard as it seems to believe, the "Macho Man" has accepted his former manager to be his ringside valet for his upcoming series of bouts against Intercontinental champion **Shawn Michaels**.

"Savage has made it clear to everyone that Sherri is just acting as his valet, and not as a manager," said a WWF source. "Randy still has his doubts about Sherri, which is natural,

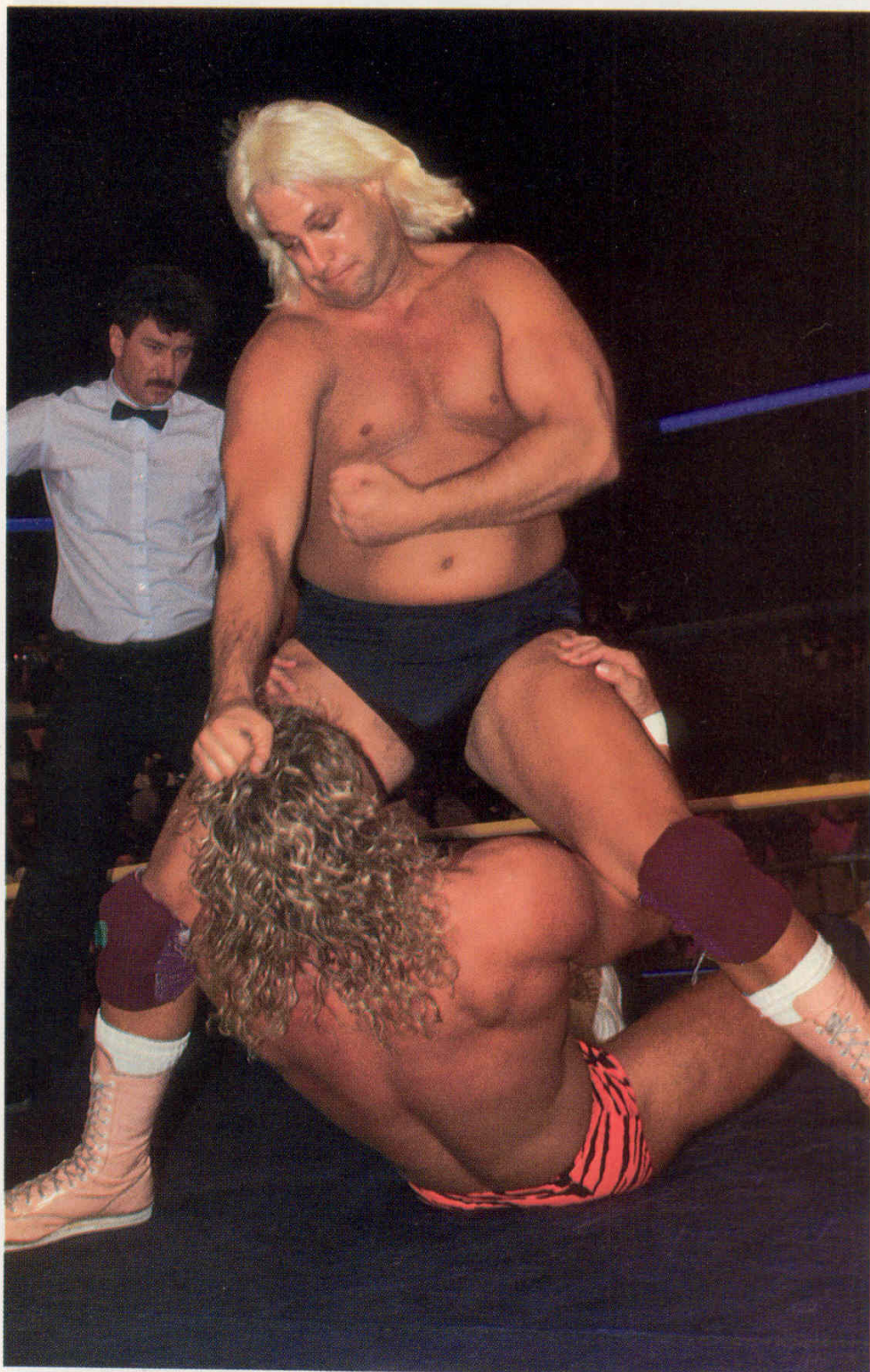
considering the way they broke up a couple of years back. But both Savage and Sherri hate Michaels, and Sherri hates the guy just that much more. This is very intriguing, though. Savage and Sherri were a great team once." Could Sherri lead Savage, whose career is mired in a pronounced slump, back to the WWF World title?

Veteran **Red Rogers**, one of the sport's most underrated stars, is now competing in Smoky Mountain ... Add **Doink** to the list of WWF stars who have made a USWA appearance, but the Clown's Memphis debut was less than memorable. He was pinned by **Jeff Jarrett** in a tag team match pitting Doink and big **Jeff Gaylord** against **Jerry Lawler** and Jarrett on February 8 ... **Buddy Landell**, the other "Nature Boy," has decided to retire. Landell has announced that he wants to become a minister. We wish you the best of luck, Buddy!

It's hard to believe that 65-year-old **Bobo Brazil** continues to compete, but there's a good reason for it: His son, **Bobo Brazil Jr.**, recently made his debut for the new International Wrestling Conference, an independent organization based in Ohio.

"I decided to come back to see my son begin his career," explained Brazil, the superstar who began his career in 1951. "I've been teaming with him, and we're now among the top contenders for the tag team title held by **Paul Harley** and **The Mexican Outlaw**. Just wait and see if we don't win it!"

Global fans have been stunned at the violent behavior of **Killer Brooks**, who doesn't seem to care if he wins or loses as long as he hurts somebody. The 284-pound veteran recently scored a pinfall victory over **Terry Simms** in a falls-count-anywhere match, but for months Brooks' record has been marred by disqualification losses as he continues to beat on his foes after matches. What's he thinking? "Hey, I'm just a natural-born barroom brawler," belched Brooks.



Buddy Landell, who recently competed in Smoky Mountain, is retiring from the mat sport. Landell, also known as the "Nature Boy," has decided to become a minister.

Chris Adams is among the busiest wrestlers in Texas these days. He's competing in World Class, Global, Big D, and other Lone Star State federations ... Newcomers to the WWF include **The Predator** and a tag team called **The Executioners** ... **"Mr. Perfect" Curt Hennig** is not included in the ratings for this issue because of an injury to his right knee he suffered while wrestling **Razor Ramon** on February 6 in Bos-

ton. Hennig was scheduled to be back in action by the time this issue hits the stands.

Joe McHugh, the longtime ring announcer for WWF television matches, died on January 31 in Allentown, Pennsylvania. McHugh introduced more than 10,000 bouts during his storied career, including boxing matches featuring legends **Muhammad Ali** and **Jack Dempsey**. McHugh was 88.

from the desk of...

Stuart M. Saks

Forgive Dr. Mutaz Habal if he missed Brutus Beefcake's return to wrestling in February. He knew about it; he didn't have to see it. "I don't like these things, boxing and wrestling," he said.

Doctors, particularly plastic surgeons, are funny that way. They don't like to see people pound their fists against one another's faces. It might be good for business, but they know too much of what really happens to the human body when heavy forces are brought against it to approve of sports that promote the activity. Besides, plenty of business comes his way by accident.

On July 4, 1990, Dr. Habal received one of his best customers ever. His name was Brutus Beefcake, but you wouldn't know it by looking at him at the time. His face was literally broken in a fluke accident in which a female parasailer's knees rammed into his face during a poor takeoff at something like 25 miles per hour.

Dr. Habal led a team of cranial-facial surgeons through an 8½-hour procedure that almost literally reconstructed the wrestler's face. The doctors had to peel back his skin and insert eight steel plates, 40 screws, and more than 100 staples.

The world marveled at the miracle Dr. Habal and his staff performed. Not only did they save the man's life, but they restored his good looks, giving him the opportunity to stay involved in wrestling as an announcer. But that wasn't the life for Beefcake. Cut down at the height of his athletic career, "The Barber" was determined to make it back as an active competitor.

In February, after a 2½-year convalescence he says was inspired by his best friend, Hulk Hogan, he announced his comeback during a live taping of *Monday Night Raw*. Dr. Habal, while pleased that he had done enough to give his patient the confidence to make such a bold move, admitted to some misgivings.

"I really can't tell you my opinion," he said by phone from his office at the Tampa Bay Cranium Facial Center. "It's his prerogative. Does it worry me? Yeah, in a way it does. This thing is not 100 percent."

Dr. Habal isn't particularly worried about Beefcake's face caving in again ("he has steel all over his face"); it's the orbits, in the area of the eyes, that are most exposed to reinjury. "The orbits are the

(Continued on page 60)

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LEX LUGER: WWF FAILURE

I guess I'm in the minority on this one, but I'm predicting that "Narcissist" Lex Luger's tenure in the WWF will be a flop.

Sure, he may stun the opposition and capture the World or Intercontinental title; he has enough natural strength and intimidation to get that job done. But once he straps the belt around his waist—what then?

If we learned one thing from Luger's tenure in WCW, it was that he is a total package of potential covered by the wrapping paper of pure ego. In order to win titles, to maintain titles, to be the kind of wrestler that dominates a federation, he has to place his ego on the back burner and concentrate on the ring business at hand. When he is able to do that, as he did during his WCW World title reign in the latter half of 1991, he is about as amazing as any wrestler can hope to be.

But in hooking up with Bobby "The Brain" Heenan, Luger has gone in precisely the opposite direction. Already, it is plainly evident that Luger's ego will be un-



"Narcissist" Lex Luger

conditionally catered to. Like the flesh-eating plant in *Little Shop Of Horrors*, Luger's ego screams, "Feed me!" And like Seymour in that film, who went out to find food for the plant, Heenan will do whatever it takes to feed that ego

and keep his newest charge happy.

A fine plan, Heenan may think, but a plan that, I believe, will ultimately—and quickly—lead to oblivion for Luger.

"Narcissist," indeed.

A QUIET TITLE THREAT?

I was rather surprised to hear the report of a recent WWF card in Philadelphia. Among such results as Kamala pinning Kim Chee (he should have turned against that ringside weasel years ago), Tito Santana pinning Damian Demento (the only place Demento is going in the WWF is out of it—and the sooner the better), and Skinner pinning Jim Powers (boy, I'm glad I didn't pay \$18 to see *this* card!) was a truly surprising match result:

Tatanka, substituting for "Mr. Perfect" Curt Hennig, pinned Razor Ramon.

Think about it: Tatanka gave away 30 pounds and seven inches to Ramon. He came into the match as a substitute, not having had a real chance to train for Ramon. By any stretch of the imagination, Tatanka went into the match a significant underdog.

And he pinned Ramon.

More surprising: It also happened in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Had it only happened once, it could be termed a fluke. But it happened twice, so we have to



Tatanka

stop a moment and take notice.

I've seen Tatanka wrestle many times, and I wasn't very impressed. Most recently, I saw him in a Madison Square Garden match against Demento, and he made practically no impression on me whatsoever. World title material? Hardly—at least not judging by the Demento match.

But the fact that he took down and pinned Ramon twice makes me want to take a closer look at

Tatanka (I wish I'd seen those Ramon matches in person). Maybe he really does have what it takes to wear a championship belt. And maybe he's just that much more modest than the average athlete in this sport with regard to talking about it.

I don't know about you, but I'm going to start keeping a closer eye on Tatanka from now on. This guy could surprise us all and go all the way.

WCW: RANDOM THOUGHTS

Some random observations regarding the huge number of developments that have taken place in WCW lately:

I'm thrilled to see Davey Boy Smith in WCW. This man is an enormous talent who deserves to be center stage in the sport. My dream matches with regard to the "British Bulldog" have him facing Barry Windham, Big Van Vader, and particularly Chris Benoit.

Just a hunch: Cactus Jack will be directing his wild style against fan favorites before long.

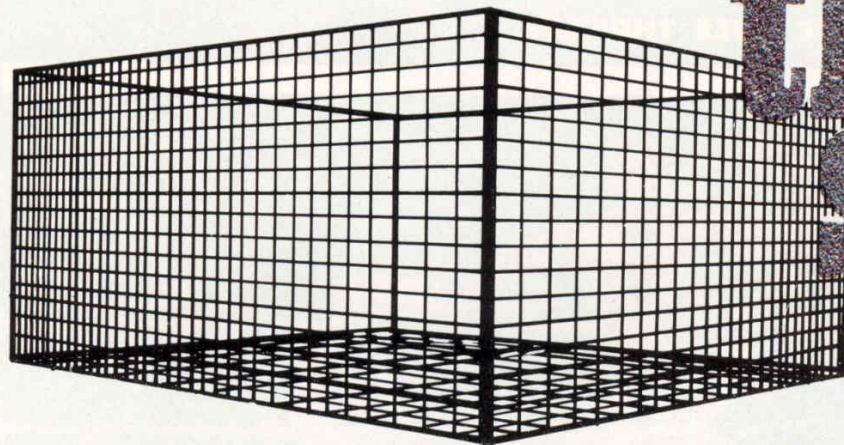
Erik Watts would do well to team with Dustin Rhodes for a while—and to let Dustin teach him a thing or two about how to conduct himself both in and out of the ring.

The Wrecking Crew would like to be The Road Warriors for the '90s. Unfortunately, I have a hunch that they might be The Master Blasters for the '90s.

I liked the touch of naming the brackets of the TV title tournament the Anderson conference and the Mr. Wrestling II confer-

ence, but instead of the Wrestling II conference (he never held that belt), wouldn't the Blanchard or Rhodes division have made more sense?

And speaking of tournaments, when is the light heavyweight tournament going to happen? What are they waiting for? It can't possibly be for *more* good light heavyweights to arrive in WCW. Aren't Benoit, Pillman, Scorpio, Badd, Tasmaniac, Vee, Gunn, Zenk, and Flamingo enough to get things going? □



the steel cage

A GOOD DEFENSE . . . Poo-poo the comeback of former WWF World champion Bob Backlund all you want. For months, even before he decided to return to the WWF, we followed the former WWF World champion's infrequent matches at small arenas for federations so small they only had two initials.

But every time we ran into Backlund, we were amazed at how much fight he had left, despite the fact that he had, essentially, taken six years off. We were amazed at his physical conditioning for a man of his advanced years. And we were stunned at just *how* scientific this scientific marvel had become. Even men like Jeff Jarrett and Rick Steamboat throw first punches these days. Backlund still prefers to *wrestle*.

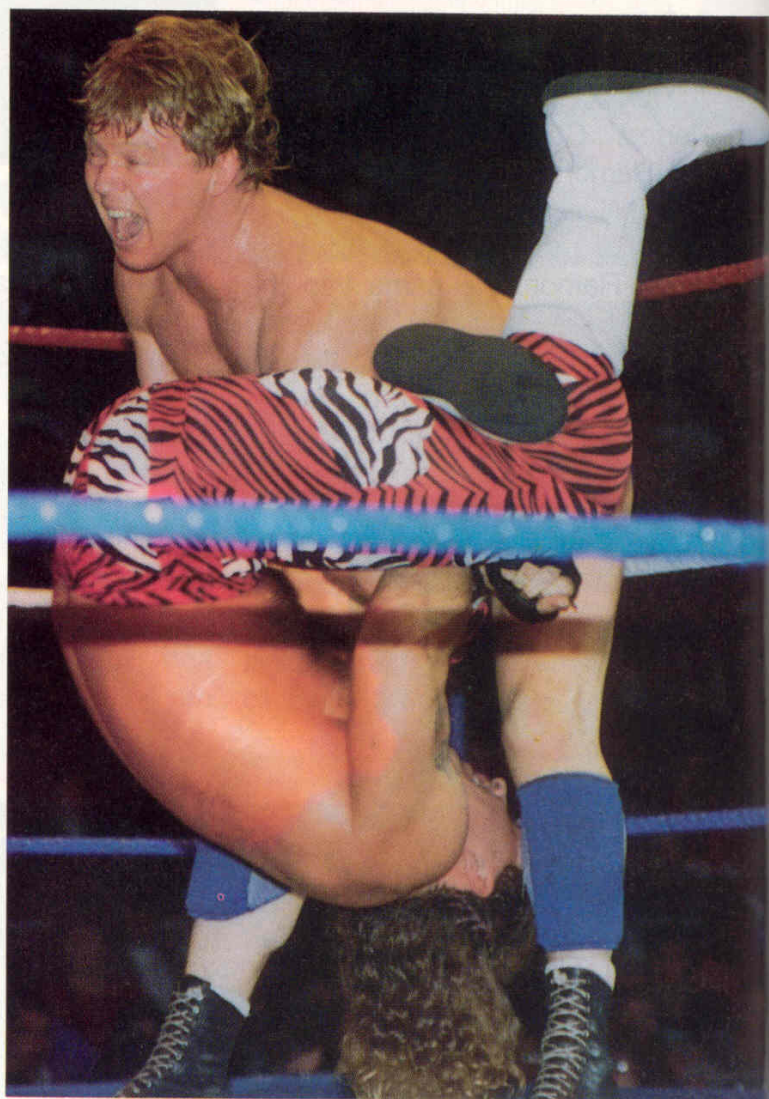
Backlund seems completely out of place in the WWF, and never was this more in evidence than at the January 29 WWF card at Madison Square Garden in New York. During the presentation of \$100,000 from the WWF to the American Red Cross for the Somalian relief efforts, every star on the card came to ringside to take part. Yeah, Backlund looked pretty odd standing among oddly dressed stars with weird names such as Damian Demento, Skinner, and The Undertaker.

But it was the final match of the night, pitting Backlund against Intercontinental champion Shawn Michaels, that told fans everything they needed to know about this still-great competitor. When the match began, few fans gave Backlund the slightest chance of defeating the young, arrogant Michaels. Some even heckled Backlund with chants such as "old-timer" or "white bread" (hey, this *was* New York, after all).

The match itself progressed into one of the oddest I'd ever seen—as well as one of the most exciting. It must be explained that Bob Backlund exhibits absolutely *no offensive repertoire whatsoever*. He can't throw a punch, doesn't use many suplexes, and rarely even uses armlocks and leglocks these days.

That's the whole idea.

That's how Bob was able to last 61 minutes at the



Former WWF World champion Bob Backlund is the sport's only defensive wrestler. He thoroughly frustrated Shawn Michaels at a recent match, forcing the Intercontinental champion to flee the ring.

Royal Rumble. And that's why Michaels, after more than 15 minutes of frustration, threw up his arms and ran away from the ring. He was so frustrated, he *wanted* to be counted out.

In 1992, Backlund was 42 years old, and was taking a rare match here and there. It was in August in Tamaqua, Pennsylvania, that the Minnesota native took on another



Fifteen years ago, Backlund was using his unique style to tie up wrestlers like Billy Francis. The "All-American Boy's" unorthodox methods could bring him another championship at the age of 43.

veteran, Paul Orndorff, in a high school gymnasium for a pretty good independent federation, Wrestling Independent Network. I love independent wrestling, but you had better believe I wouldn't have driven seven hours from New York if the Backlund-Orndorff bout wasn't on the card.

After Backlund scored the pinfall by using his amazing bridge, I got a chance to speak to him in the locker room. He wouldn't entertain talk about a full-time comeback at that point—he didn't even want to say when or where his next match would be—but this is a guy who'll spend hours talking about wrestling, both professional and amateur-style.

"When I think about it, I believe I was never a better all-around wrestler than I was in 1971," Backlund recalled. "That's when I won the NCAA Division II title in the 191-pound class for the North Dakota State team. The key to my success, I think, was that I was able to avoid and counter anything my opponents could come up with. I'd let 'em think they had the advantage, then I'd counter, tie 'em up, wear 'em down."

"Some people think my method took too long," said Backlund, "but I'll tell you, it works. I think I took some beatings in the pros because I got sucked into wrestling in a style that wasn't comfortable for me. Believe me, wrestling techniques can beat any kind of offense—from a punch to a metal folding chair. That's why it's called *wrestling*."

And that's why I believe Backlund, as strange as this sounds, is the most unique wrestler in the sport today.

Backlund has become a purely defensive wrestler, the only man of his kind in the pros. He allows his opponents to use every move they can think of while deftly avoiding them all. Then, he waits for the other guy to make a fatal mistake, and he ties him up and pins him.

No blood. No violence. No controversy or feuds. Just solid, sound wrestling. Granted, Bob's style isn't for everybody. Fans who never got to see Backlund during his prime *really* don't get it. His appearances outside the Northeast have been met with a lot of head-scratching and shoulder-shrugging. Needless to say, he's not the kind of competitor who rocks you out of your seat with flying triple-somersault splashes.

Let's face it. Offense is what sells in sports. Fans buy tickets to see the Chicago Bulls to watch Michael Jordan scorch the nets for his 30 points, not to watch John Paxson play suffocating man-to-man.

But isn't there room in wrestling for a *wrestler* anymore? Backlund certainly seems to think so, and his record in 1993 is exceptional. Given a few more opportunities, Backlund could beat the badly befuddled Michaels, who blurted out "What is he *doing* !?" after bolting the ring midway through the MSG match.

So cheer your 2 Cold Scorpios and Lightning Kids. Razz your Lex Ligers and Big Van Vaders. If you want to find me, I'll be in the back of the arena with my binoculars, sitting there enthralled, trying to figure out just what in the heck kind of defense Bob Backlund is going to come up with.

Right along with his opponent.



TEX SLAZENGER had a grin on his face wider than Texas. He had a ferocious-looking headlock clamped on the head of Johnny Gunn, and the look on his eyes suggested he didn't intend on letting go—not for a while, anyway.

In one corner, Shanghai Pierce smiled broadly. In the other, Tom Zenk did not. By the time Slazenger tagged out to Pierce, Gunn was too weak to fight back with any fire. No surprise, then, that Pierce and Slazenger went on to win the match.

Zenk and Gunn weren't supposed to lose to Pierce and Slazenger. They weren't supposed to lose to The Wrecking Crew.

What happened?

Zenk and Gunn aren't even

sure what happened.

"You tell us," Zenk said with a shrug. "Give us a clue."

Sometimes, performance lives up to promise. Sometimes, there is nothing *but* promise. Tom Zenk

and Johnny Gunn are struggling to make their performance worthy of their promise. They are failing.

Turning title dreams into titles is never easy, but "Z-Man" Tom Zenk and Johnny Gunn didn't think it would be this hard.

These two great young athletes were convinced from the moment they became a team that the WCW World tag team title would be theirs. They had every reason to be confident.

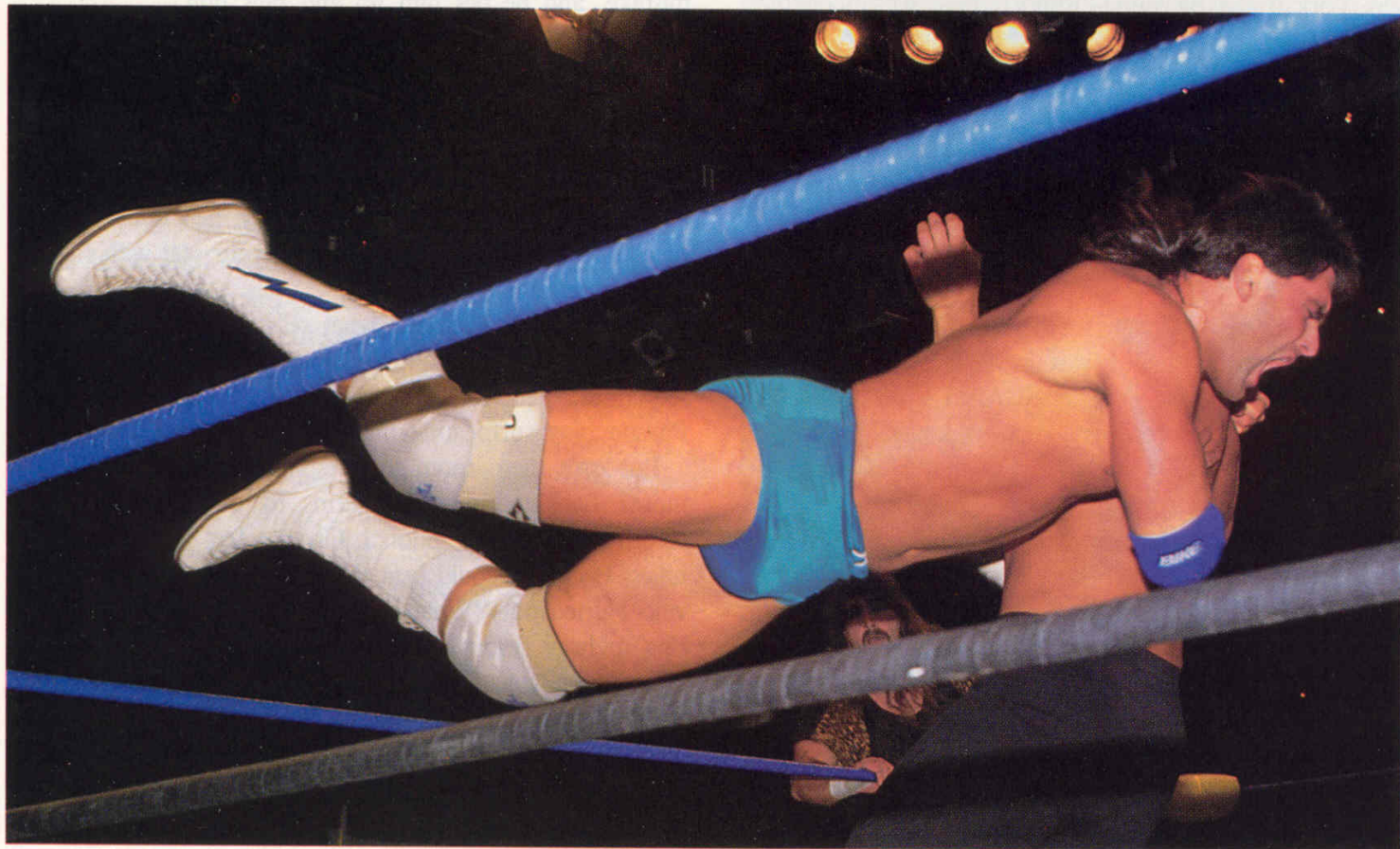
Zenk held the now-defunct U.S. tag team title with Brian Pillman. He also had distinguished

himself with an excellent pairing with Rick Martel in the WWF. In Gunn, though, this fine tag competitor believed he had found the best partner of them all.

(Continued on page 56)

WIN LOSE OR DRAW

BY ANDY RODRIGUEZ

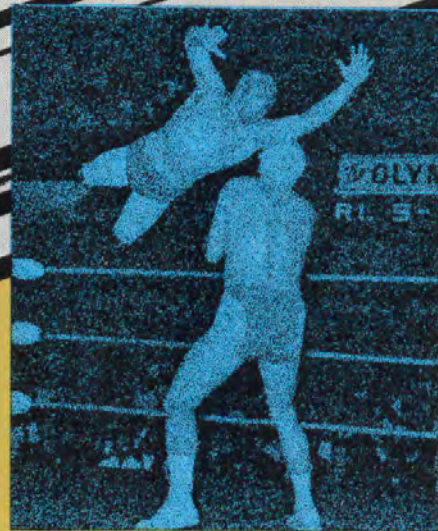


Johnny Gunn's flights of fancy were grounded at Clash of the Champions XXII, when he and Tom Zenk lost to The Wrecking Crew. Gunn still believes he and Zenk have what it takes to win the WCW World tag team title.

BY EDDIE ELLNER

off the Top Rope

If you wish to contribute to Ellner's mailbag,
send your letters to:



TOP ROPE, Box 48, Rockville Centre, NY 11571

[Editor's Note: The opinions expressed in this column are those of the letter writers and Eddie Ellner himself. They do not necessarily represent the editorial views of this magazine.]

IN MY DREAMS, this arrived in the mail:

Dear Mr. Ellner,

Though you used Andre as a punching bag these last few years, we know it was strictly a criticism of the wrestler, and not the man. We know you mourn his untimely passing along with millions of his fans.

Ha! Asking you readers to intelligently distinguish between criticism and personal assassination is like asking Bill Apter to wear his hair in a ponytail. The news of Andre the Giant's January 27 death had barely hit the papers before the real letters—hundreds of them—started pouring in.

Dear Eddie,

I hope you're happy now. A fine wrestler and extraordinary human being is dead, and all you have to show for it is a bunch of nasty columns.

CINDY TALBOT
Santa Fe, NM

Dear Cindy,

If you think I'm happy now, you can only imagine my rapture at your own premature and untimely passing.



There are misguided souls out there who believe that the death of Andre the Giant was my fault.

Dear Ellner,

You wish you were half the man Andre was.

DARREN WELLS
Montreal

Dear Darren,

To fulfill your wish, I'd have to gain 170 pounds. Sorry.

Dear Mr. Ellner,

For your mistreatment of Andre the Most Excellent Giant, you should be boiled in your own vomit and cut into sushi rolls.

HAI IRAKOWA
Tokyo

Hey Hai,

What? So you tastebud-dead Japa-

nese could put me on the menu alongside fried eel and broiled jellyfish? Never!

Dear Eddie,

The whole Andre the Giant Idiot thing you started was the sign of a juvenile temperament. A real columnist would never have stooped so low. But if you had something intelligent to write about, we'd be spared your inane rhetoric each month. Might as well wish for pigs to fly.

KELLY FANUCI
Los Angeles

Dear Kelly,

If they could, your poor father could never have captured his wife.

Dear Eddie,

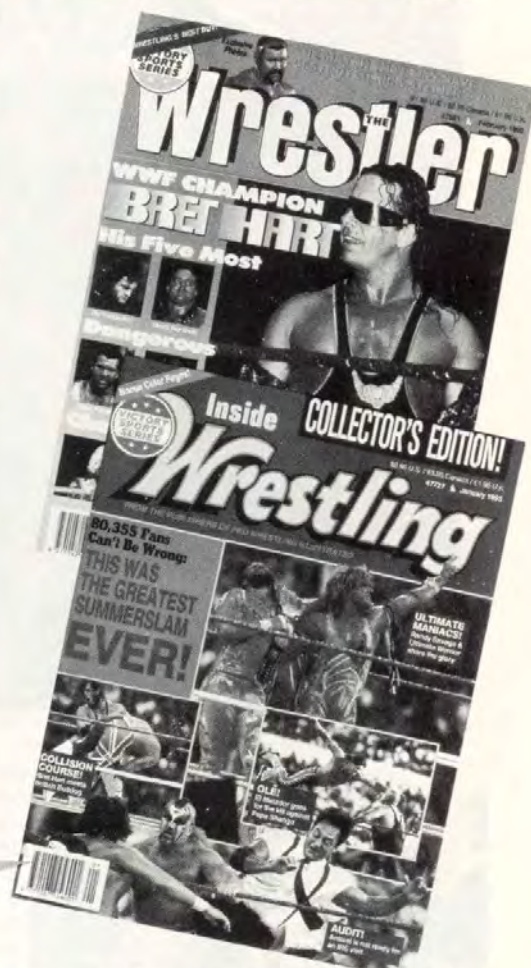
The passing of our favorite athletes is inevitable, though I would have hoped Andre could have enjoyed a few years of peace and solitude in retirement. I know your job is to call them as you see them, but I can't help wondering if you feel at all guilty over your mistreatment of Andre over the years. Where is your compassion, your humanity? Don't you feel a little sick inside right now? Imagine if the feeling never passes. That is the fate I wish upon you.

SUSIE JAMESON
Portland, OR

(Continued on page 58)

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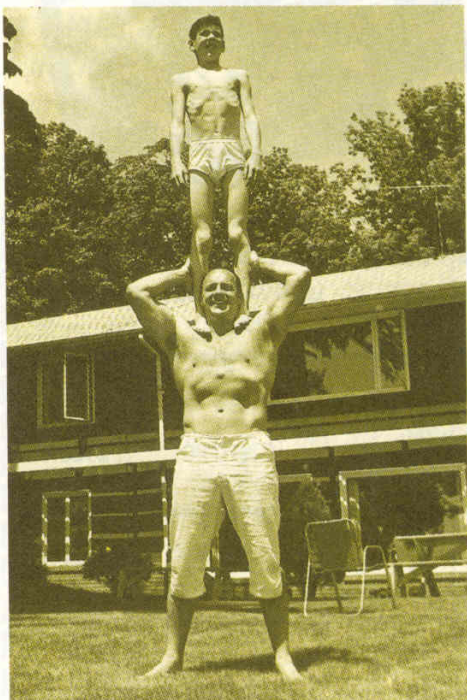
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TimeCAPSULES



A FIRST (OF MANY) FOR FLAIR

It was a festive occasion for Ric Flair—though not for most fans—when he won his first NWA World title from Dusty Rhodes on September 7, 1981, in Kansas City, Missouri. NWA promoter Jim Crockett (left) monitored the celebration as Flair's father, Richard, former NWA World champion Pat O'Connor, Flair, and Ric's mother, Kay, enjoyed the moment of triumph. "Even after all the success I've had," Flair said recently, "the first title win is always the most memorable."



MOMENTS AFTER THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN, GREG BLASTED DONNA WITH A CROSS-BODY

When most fans think of Verne Gagne, they think of his superior amateur career and nine AWA World championships. When Greg Gagne, a fine pro in his own right, thinks of Verne Gagne, he thinks of a dad who, despite a grueling schedule, always made time for his children. "The best memories I have of growing up are messing around with my dad," recalled Greg. "Even Donna and Kathy, my sisters, would wrestle with him. He was the best!"



STEVE & MARILYN & BOB & BETTY

It was a picture of marital bliss as Steve and Bob Stanlee, two of the most popular stars of the '50s and '60s, were able to enjoy an after-dinner look through the scrapbook during a rare night off in 1963. Steve's wife, Marilyn (left), actually broached the subject of mixed tag team matches. "Both Marilyn and Bobby's wife, Betty, were fine athletes," said Steve in 1967. "We thought about it, but we never carried the idea through. I think we were a little bit ahead of our time with that one."

Every other month, Pro Wrestling Illustrated will pore through its massive photo collection to bring you some of the most unique photographs the mat world has ever seen!



MOORE, MOORE, MOORE

When the Shires brothers, Ray and Roy, began dominating the Indianapolis area with their vicious tactics, matchmakers knew they needed to go to drastic measures to stop them. They called in former world light heavyweight boxing champion Archie Moore to take on *both* brothers in boxing matches—on the same day, October 1, 1960! During the signing, Moore was warned about the Shires' tactics. "Piece of cake," said Moore, who proceeded to mash both brothers' faces (Roy's getting blasted with a left here) before winning on a disqualification when both brothers entered the ring.

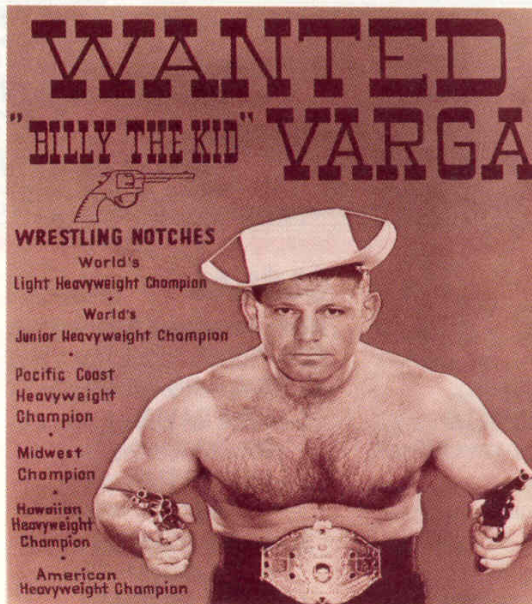


REDS INVADE WHITE HOUSE!

There was very little U.S. patriotism shown on this day in 1985, when Ivan Koloff took his nephew Nikita (center) and young Krusher Khrushchev to the White House. "This is where all the lies are disseminated," Ivan instructed the youngsters. Now, however, Nikita tells a different story about that day. "On the outside, I held up the Russian flag and spit all over the place," Nikita recalls. "But on the inside, I was very proud to be there. It was an honor to be in the place where so much U.S. history was made, even if I could never admit it to my uncle Ivan."

REWARD: WHATEVER'S LYING AROUND THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Today, you never see the kind of promotional savvy Billy "The Kid" Varga showed in this 1961 photo. When Varga, also known as "The Count," would travel to a new territory, he'd distribute this handsome poster that included a virtual resume of championships he'd accumulated. "Hey, you gotta make an impression," said Varga, who continued to make an impression after his mat career, moving on to a film career in Hollywood.

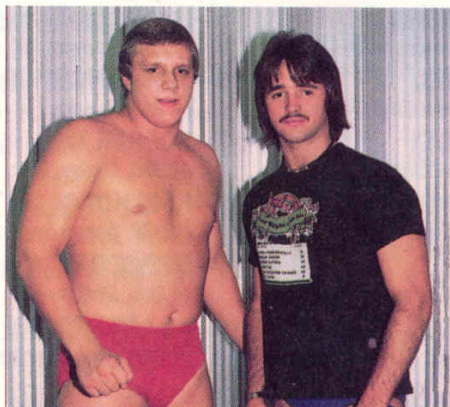


MUMMY, YOU GOIN' OUT?

Those who believe that Papa Shango and Doink are the weirdest wrestlers in the sport's history have a lot of history to catch up on. There were wrestlers named Pop-eye Saylor, Battman, and "Spaceman" Frank Hickey. But the oddest specimen of them all was a bandaged oddity called The Mummy, who actually claimed to have died and been reincarnated. Where, he was asked as this 1969 photo was snapped, does a person like this go on a night off? "Back to the tombs," Mummy insisted. But of course.

THE BAM BAM & ROLL EXPRESS

To identify this 1977 photo, we practically had to guess who the person on the left was. Unbelievably, that's Terry Gordy next to Robert Gibson. Gordy, still in his teens, had a totally different personality in those days, according to Gibson. "Sure, I'd team with him from time to time," recalled Gibson, still a few years from forming The Rock 'n' Roll Express with Rick Morton. "He was a pretty nice kid . . . until Michael Hayes sunk his claws in him, that is."



Wrestling

ILLUSTRATED

PWI's TOP 10



Yokozuna

TOP 10

- 1 BIG VAN VADER**
404, Denver, CO
(1) WCW World champion
- 2 BRET HART**
235, Calgary, Alberta
(2) WWF World champion
- 3 DUSTIN RHODES**
254, Austin, TX
(9) WCW U.S. champion
- 4 SHAWN MICHAELS**
220, San Antonio, TX
(3) WWF Intercontinental champion
- 5 YOKOZUNA**
505, Samoa
(8) No. 2 contender: WWF title
- 6 TATANKA**
260 Miami, FL
(-) No. 1 contender: I-C title
- 7 JERRY LAWLER**
234, Memphis, TN
(5) USWA champion
- 8 BRIAN CHRISTOPHER**
230, Memphis, TN
(7) USWA Southern champion
- 9 STING**
260, Venice Beach, CA
(-) No. 2 contender: WCW title
- 10 TONY ANTHONY**
235, Bucksnort, TN
(6) Smoky Mountain champion

TAG TEAMS

- 1 RICK STEAMBOAT & SHANE DOUGLAS**
Combined weight: 461 pounds
(1) WCW World tag team champions
- 2 STEVE AUSTIN & BRIAN PILLMAN**
Combined weight: 467 pounds
(2) No. 1 contenders: WCW tag title
- 3 THE NASTY BOYS**
Combined weight: 478 pounds
(4) No. 1 contenders: WWF tag title
- 4 MONEY INC.**
Combined weight: 492 pounds
(3) WWF World tag team champions
- 5 RICK & SCOTT STEINER**
Combined weight: 483 pounds
(5) No. 2 contenders: WWF tag title
- 6 THE HEADSHRINKERS**
Combined weight: 520 pounds
(7) No. 3 contenders: WWF tag title
- 7 THE HEAVENLY BODIES**
Combined weight: 445 pounds
(-) Smoky Mountain tag team champions
- 8 THE MOONDOGS**
Combined weight: 663 pounds
(8) USWA tag team champions
- 9 THE WRECKING CREW**
Combined weight: 593 pounds
(9) No. 2 contenders: WCW tag title
- 10 THE BAD BREED**
Combined weight: 667 pounds
(-) Global tag team champions

WCW

World Champion:
BIG VAN VADER

(C) 404, Denver, CO

- 1—DUSTIN RHODES**
(1) 254, Austin, TX
- 2—STING**
(3) 260, Venice Beach, CA
- 3—CACTUS JACK**
(8) 304, Truth or Cons., NM
- 4—PAUL ORNDORFF**
(9) 253, Brandon, FL
- 5—BARRY WINDHAM**
(4) 263, Sweetwater, TX
- 6—RON SIMMONS**
(2) 260, Warner Robins, GA
- 7—CHRIS BENOIT**
(7) 218, Edmonton, Alberta
- 8—2 COLD SCORPIO**
(6) 222, Denver, CO
- 9—ERIK WATTS**
(5) 262, Oklahoma City, OK
- 10—STEVE REGAL**
(-) 235, London, England

WWF

World Champion:
BRET HART

(C) 235, Calgary, Alberta

- 1—SHAWN MICHAELS**
(1) 220, San Antonio, TX
- 2—YOKOZUNA**
(3) 505, Samoa
- 3—TATANKA**
(8) 260, Miami, FL
- 4—THE UNDERTAKER**
(5) 320, parts unknown
- 5—BOB BACKLUND**
(9) 242, Princeton, MN
- 6—RICK MARTEL**
(-) 236, Quebec City, Quebec
- 7—BIG BOSSMAN**
(-) 309, Cobb County, GA
- 8—RAZOR RAMON**
(2) 291, Minneapolis, MN
- 9—DOINK**
(-) 236, parts unknown
- 10—SKINNER**
(-) 236, Tampa, FL

GLOBAL

North American Champion:
ROD PRICE

(C) 265, Los Angeles, CA

- 1—MIKE DAVIS**
(10) 243, Tampa, FL
- 2—JOHN TATUM**
(-) 236, Hollywood, CA
- 3—CHRIS ADAMS**
(-) 228, Stratford, UK
- 4—ANGEL OF DEATH**
(7) 310, Los Angeles, CA
- 5—BLACK BART**
(-) 261, Pampa, TX
- 6—BOB DUNCUM JR.**
(-) 280, Austin, TX
- 7—BOOKER T**
(-) 280, Dallas, TX
- 8—KING KONG**
(-) 338, parts unknown
- 9—STEVIE RAY**
(-) 265, Dallas, TX
- 10—KILLER BROOKS**
(4) 284, Waxahachie, TX

USWA

USWA Champion:
JERRY LAWLER

(C) 234, Memphis, TN

- 1—BRIAN CHRISTOPHER**
(1) 230, Memphis, TN
- 2—JEFF JARRETT**
(2) 220, Hendersonville, TN
- 3—MASTER OF TERROR I**
(-) 235, parts unknown
- 4—MIKE SAMPLES**
(5) 266, Dallas, TX
- 5—JEFF GAYLORD**
(7) 288, St. Louis, MO
- 6—ROCK 'N' ROLL PHANTOM**
(-) 245, parts unknown
- 7—DAN DAVIS**
(4) 238, Nashville, TN
- 8—MIKE MILLER**
(3) 265, New Orleans, LA
- 9—DON HARRIS**
(-) 277, Portland, OR
- 10—DOINK**
(-) 236, parts unknown

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. Most Popular and Most Hated ratings are based on nationwide telephone and arena surveys of wrestling fans and on the volume and character of mail that comes to our offices. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue, while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

MOST POPULAR

- 1 STING**
260, Venice Beach, CA
Last issue: No. 1 Most Popular
- 2 BRET HART**
235, Calgary, Alberta
Last issue: No. 2 Most Popular
- 3 CURT HENNING**
235, Minneapolis, MN
Last issue: No. 7 Most Popular
- 4 THE UNDERTAKER**
320, Dallas, TX
Last issue: No. 3 Most Popular
- 5 CRUSH**
310, Honolulu, HI
Last issue: No. 4 Most Popular
- 6 DUSTIN RHODES**
254, Austin, TX
Last issue: No. 5 Most Popular
- 7 BOB BACKLUND**
242, Princeton, MN
Last issue: unrated
- 8 RON SIMMONS**
260, Warner Robins, GA
Last issue: No. 6 Most Popular
- 9 RANDY SAVAGE**
245, Sarasota, FL
Last issue: No. 9 Most Popular
- 10 CACTUS JACK**
304, Truth or Cons., NM
Last issue: unrated

MOST HATED

- 1 YOKOZUNA**
505, Samoa
Last issue: No. 3 Most Hated
- 2 BARRY WINDHAM**
263, Sweetwater, TX
Last issue: No. 2 Most Hated
- 3 DOINK**
236, parts unknown
Last issue: No. 1 Most Hated
- 4 BIG VAN VADER**
404, Denver, CO
Last issue: No. 5 Most Hated
- 5 SHAWN MICHAELS**
220, San Antonio, TX
Last issue: No. 6 Most Hated
- 6 TONY ANTHONY**
235, Bucksport, TN
Last issue: unrated
- 7 BRIAN CHRISTOPHER**
220, Memphis, TN
Last issue: No. 7 Most Hated
- 8 ARN ANDERSON**
249, Minneapolis, MN
Last issue: No. 9 Most Hated
- 9 KEVIN SULLIVAN**
252, Boston, MA
Last issue: No. 8 Most Hated
- 10 RAZOR RAMON**
290, Minneapolis, MN
Last issue: No. 4 Most Hated

For period ended February 12, 1993

CUMULATIVE RATINGS

These ratings are based on the past 10 issues of this magazine. We have examined our ratings for each of those issues—in our Top 10 and Tag Team categories only—and assigned each position a point value: 10 points for a number-one rating, nine for a number-two ranking, and so on down to one point for a number-10 rating. The point values for all wrestlers in the past 10 issues have been compiled, allowing a maximum of 100 points. Each issue we'll present the top five finishers in each category. While our regular ratings reflect the past month, these cumulative ratings give an indication of wider trends in the sport.

SINGLES

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 1—BRET HART | 73 points |
| 2—RICK RUDE | 53 points |
| 3—RANDY SAVAGE | 51 points |
| 4—RON SIMMONS | 39 points |
| 4—SHAWN MICHAELS | 39 points |

TAG TEAMS

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 1—MONEY INC. | 69 points |
| 2—NATURAL DISASTERS | 56 points |
| 2—RICK & SCOTT STEINER | 56 points |
| 4—GORDY & WILLIAMS | 37 points |
| 5—NASTY BOYS | 35 points |

SMOKY MOUNTAIN

Smoky Mountain Champion:
TONY ANTHONY

(C) 235, Bucksport, TN

- 1—TIM HORNER**
(2) 235, Morristown, TN
- 2—TRACEY SMOTHERS**
(1) 227, Atlanta, GA
- 3—BRIAN LEE**
(4) 251, Los Angeles, CA
- 4—NIGHTSTALKER**
(5) 306, parts unknown
- 5—BOBBY EATON**
(-) 233, Huntsville, AL
- 6—RICK MORTON**
(-) 228, Memphis, TN
- 7—KILLER KYLE**
(7) 303, Atlanta, GA
- 8—KEVIN SULLIVAN**
(3) 252, Boston, MA
- 9—RENO RIGGINS**
(10) 228, Los Vegas, NV
- 10—RIP ROGERS**
(-) 238, Atlanta, GA

IWCCW

IWCCW Champion:
TITLE VACANT

To be determined in tourney

- 1—JOE SAVOLDI**
(2) 220, Parsippany, NJ
- 2—JIMMY DEO**
(1) 301, Blandon, PA
- 3—TASMANIAC**
(4) 245, Tasmania
- 4—L.A. GORE**
(3) 288, Los Angeles, CA
- 5—TOMMY DREAMER**
(6) 245, Yonkers, NY
- 6—NIKOLAI VOLKOFF**
(5) 280, Moscow, Russia
- 7—THE NINJA**
(8) 277, Japan
- 8—EL DIABLO**
(7) 246, Toluca, Mexico
- 9—JOHNNY WILDSIDE**
(10) 285, parts unknown
- 10—COUSIN LUKE**
(9) 336, Mud Lick, KY

ECW: ECW champion—The Sandman; 1—Jimmy Snuka; 2—Don Muraco; 3—Terry Funk; 4—Salvatore Bellomo; 5—Rockin' Rebel; 6—Johnny Hot Body; 7—Glenn Osbourne; 8—Ivan Koloff; 9—J.T. Smith; 10—Tommy Cairo.

IWA: IWA champion—Vladimir Koloff; 1—Thunderfoot II; 2—Stan Lane; 3—Preston Steele; 4—Tracey Smothers; 5—Ivan Koloff; 6—Tommy Rogers; 7—Colt Steele; 8—The Big Cheese; 9—Scott Summers; 10—Cousin Junior.

IWF: IWF champion—title vacant; 1—Hercules Hernandez; 2—The Possessor; 3—Chubby M.C.; 4—Greg Valentine; 5—Cliff Anderson; 6—Rob Van Dam; 7—Chris Proctor; 8—Kendall Windham; 9—Nuclear Assassin; 10—Billy Brooks.

PWA: PWA champion—The Hater; 1—Charlie Norris; 2—Brad Rheingans; 3—Lightning Kid; 4—The Punisher; 5—Randy Gusto; 6—Tommy Ferrara; 7—Steve Berg; 8—Derrick Dukes; 9—Larry Cameron; 10—Billy Blaze.

PWF: PWF champion—Italian Stallion; 1—George South; 2—Flaming Youth; 3—Cruel Connection II; 4—Star Ryder; 5—Scotty McKeever; 6—Austin Steele; 7—Gentleman James; 8—Gladiator II; 9—Russian Assassin; 10—Killozer.

USA: Championship Wrestling USA TV champion—Col. DeBeers; 1—C.W. Bergstrom; 2—Michelle Starr; 3—Bobby Blair; 4—Karl Pope; 5—Al Madril; 6—Billy Two Eagles; 7—Bart Sawyer; 8—Mike Winner; 9—Buddy Wayne; 10—Max Steele.

WIN: WIN champion—A.C. Golden; 1—A.J. Fritzoid; 2—Chris Candido; 3—Agent Orange; 4—Pain; 5—The Spider; 6—Nick Tarentino; 7—Adrian Hall; 8—Morgus the Maniac; 9—Lightning Kid; 10—Ricky Blues.

WWC: WWC Universal champion—Carlos Colon; 1—Invader I; 1—La Ley; 3—The Equalizer; 4—Rex King; 5—Mohammad Hussein; 6—Ray Gonzalez; 7—El Vigilante; 8—Victor Jovica; 9—Solid Gold 14 Karat; 10—El Vikingo.

RATINGS ANALYSIS

Every month, this column will tell fans how we go about rating over 200 wrestlers in 20 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important—and respected—ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans.

Should there be a third world champion? Here's a topic we haven't thought much about since the demise of the AWA three years ago. This always-simmering debate was brought up again by Dennis Windsor of Boonville, Missouri.

I am a big wrestling fan who is also a big fan of your magazines, wrote Windsor. I would like to know why your magazines never designated another federation as worthy of having world-championship status. I think the fans should have a vote to decide what federation that would be.

I think it could be the NWA, Global, USWA, IWCCW, or the IWF. I'd be interested in finding out how other readers feel about this.

This intriguing topic makes us bring up some points that have been covered in our magazines before, but not for the last several years:



Masa Chono

What type of organization should be considered? The reason that the WWF and WCW titleholders are established as world champions by our magazines is because they truly are worldwide organizations. In the last year alone, both federations presented cards not only in the United States and Canada, but in Japan, Germany, England, and Ireland. Also, rarely does a day

pass when either the WWF or WCW isn't promoting a card somewhere in the world.

Naturally, any federation that presents cards all over the world qualifies to have champions that are ranked as world champions. But how about the other choices?

The NWA: Here's where things get a bit confusing. In 1992, the NWA heavyweight title was revived, and scientific stylist **Masa Chono** won a tournament to capture the belt—the same one that **Ric Flair**, **Ron Garvin**, and other NWA World champions once wore. The only trouble is, when the organization once known as the NWA changed its name to WCW in 1990, they changed the name of the existing championship, formerly known as the NWA World title, to the WCW World title. That, of course,

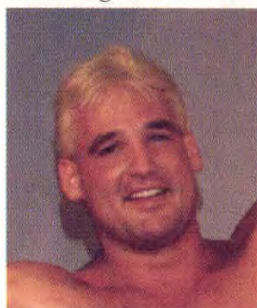
makes the NWA title that fans see today a new title, albeit one with a famous history.

Right now, NWA champion **The Great Muta** has been defending his belt not only in the Orient, but in frequent trips to the United States as well. Should we designate the NWA title a world title?

USWA: This organization promotes cards in Tennessee, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Mississippi, and other Southern states. It's not quite national in scope, but this federation has a rich history.

The territory has been around since the 1950s and has remained strong. **Jerry Jarrett**, father of USWA superstar **Jeff Jarrett**, is the federation's president. He and matchmaker **Eddie Marlin** are doing something that's unheard of in today's wrestling world: keeping a regional organization a vital, thriving, and important part of the sport.

Like most leagues, the USWA refers to its heavyweight champion, **Jerry Lawler**, as its "world champion." Should we designate the USWA title a world title?



Rod Price

Global: This organization, currently finishing its run on the ESPN cable network, appears to be a solid one, but limited. When the organization was founded in 1990, the idea was for Global to present cards all over the world, and to broadcast events from foreign countries as well.

Needless to say, Global's grandiose plans never came to full fruition. In fact, the weekly cards at the Sportatorium in Dallas are the only cards the organization presents. Regardless, the heavyweight champion, **Rod Price**, continues to defend his belt a minimum of four times a month, which is a worthy schedule for any champion. Should we designate the Global title a world title?

What's your opinion! Are there other organizations you believe are worthy of world-title status? Think the NWA, USWA, or Global deserve the nod? Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, Box 48, Rockville Centre, NY 11571. □

TASMANIAC

PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED?
YECCH!

STING?
BLECCH!

BRET HART?
BRECCH!

IT'S TIME FOR
AN ALTERNATIVE!

WHY RULEBREAKER?

Wrestling 93: Rulebreaker is a totally new concept in wrestling publications.

"The magazine with the bad attitude" is the brainchild of veteran wrestling journalist Eddie Ellner, who picked up the mantle of pro-rulebreaking journalism when that genre's creator and greatest practitioner, Dan Shocket, died in 1985.

"It's vital that both sides of the coin are represented in the marketplace," Ellner has argued for years, "and too many of the magazines on the newsstand pander totally to the fan favorites. What about the other side of the issue?"

Now, in the Constitutional spirit of free speech and the open exchange of ideas, Ellner has been provided with the forum he has long demanded.

Pick up a copy of Wrestling 93: Rulebreaker and decide for yourself whether Ellner's truth is yours to share!

INCLUDED IN EACH ISSUE:

- Full-length feature stories from the rulebreaking perspective!
- Eight pages of color pinups!
- "Talkin' Trash" gossip column
- "Wimps & Warriors" honorees
- An entirely new twist on "Ratings"
- Rulebreaking "Hall Of Fame"
- Revolving "My Say" column
- In-depth "Interview 93"
- "The Truth" by Eddie Ellner
- "Balancing Act" by Bill Apter
- "Rulebreaker's Insider"
- and much, much more!



YOU HAVE TO SEE IT TO BELIEVE IT!

ON SALE NOW AT NEWSSTANDS EVERYWHERE!

POST-CONFERENCE



"Beautiful" Bobby Eaton has beaten Rick Steamboat for the WCW World tag team title once before. Now a member of The Heavenly Bodies, Eaton would like the opportunity to do it again.

"BEAUTIFUL" BOBBY EATON doesn't have much to say. He usually lets his actions speak for him.

As 1992 came to a close, Eaton left WCW without much fanfare. It had been an up-and-down year for the former TV champion; he and Arn Anderson began 1992 as WCW World tag team champions, lost the belts in May, then never regained their spark, even after hiring Michaels Hayes as an adviser.

With the demise of The Dangerous Alliance, most members went their separate ways. Anderson suffered an injury, dismantling the tag team. Left in limbo, Eaton received a call from Jim Cornette, Eaton's manager with The Midnight Express in 1988.

Cornette, now managing The Heavenly Bodies in Smoky Mountain, was looking to increase the size of his stable and asked Eaton to come on board. With an opportunity to wrestle with Stan Lane, his former partner in the Express, Eaton jumped at the chance.

Eaton made his SMW debut on January 18 in Newton, North Carolina, delivering a sneak-attack "Alabama Jam" legdrop to Rick Morton as the Bodies won the SMW tag team title from The Rock 'n' Roll Express. Two weeks later, Eaton was back in WCW, following Cornette in his all-out assault on Morton and Robert Gibson.

Eaton has always been a very agreeable sort, so we were not surprised when he agreed to sit down with Editor-in-Chief Craig Peters, Copy Editor Chris Bernucca, and Contributing Editor Eddie Ellner prior to a WCW card at The Omni in Atlanta, Georgia. With all he has been through in recent months, we were somewhat surprised at how little Eaton had to say.

BOBBY EATON

CHRIS BERNUCCA: Hey, Bobby, what's new?

BOBBY EATON: Nothin'.

CRAIG PETERS: Wait a minute! How can you say "nothing"? You're competing in two federations, you're back with Jim Cornette and Stan Lane, you're back in WCW ... How can you just sit there and say "nothing"?

EATON: Easy.

EDDIE ELLNER: Hey guys, if Bobby doesn't want to talk, Bobby won't talk. Isn't that right, Bobby?

EATON: Pretty much.

PETERS: So, do you want to talk?

EATON: Depends.

BERNUCCA (upset): Oh, this is just great. Depends on what?

EATON: On what you want to talk about.

BERNUCCA: My God, a sentence. Did you hear that, Peters? Bobby Eaton said an entire sentence.

ELLNER: Back off, Bernucca. Not everyone has a big mouth like you. Bobby, let's talk about The Heavenly Bodies, who might be the best tag team in all of wrestling right now.

EATON: Okay.

ELLNER: How did you, Jim, and Stan get back together?

EATON: Jimmy called me.

PETERS (frustrated): And?

EATON: And what?

PETERS: And what did he say!?

EATON: Oh. He said, "Hey, Bob, how would you like to work with Stan and me again?" And I thought about it a little bit, and I asked him about what my role would be, because Stan was already teaming with Tom Prichard, and I didn't want to step on Tom's toes. And he said, "I'll take care of

that. Just be in Newton on the 18th." That was good enough for me, because Jim's always been square with me.

PETERS: What about Tom Prichard? You know what they say—two's company, three's a crowd.

EATON: There's nobody in the Bodies sayin' that. At least not out loud.

BERNUCCA: That's not what we've heard. The rumor mill says Prichard is more than a little upset with your sudden appearance.

EATON: Well, that's something for Tom to hammer out with Jim. I don't feel right talking about another man's feelings. Let's talk about something else.

ELLNER: Yes, let's. This recent alignment makes it just like old times again, doesn't it, Bobby?

EATON: Kinda.

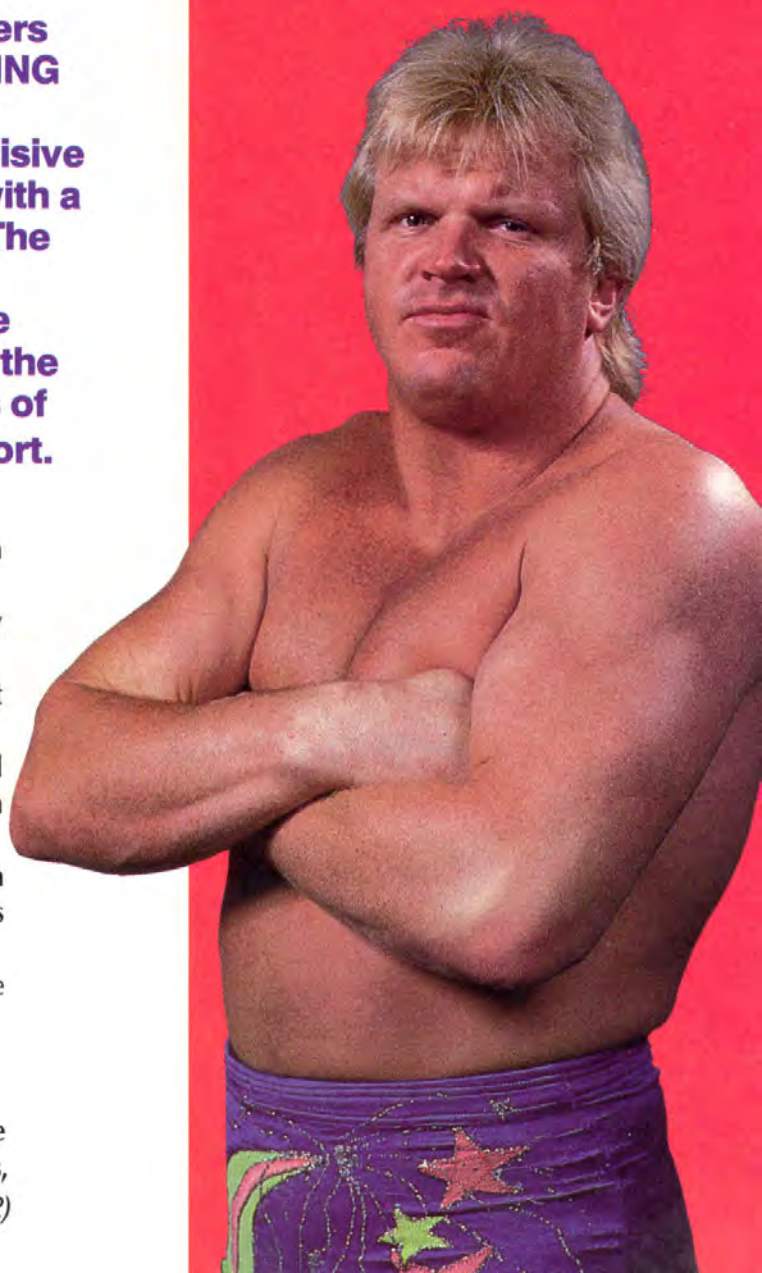
ELLNER: In what ways?

EATON: Well, it's not totally like old times, because we were all a bit younger then. Plus, when we beat the Rock 'n' Rolls,

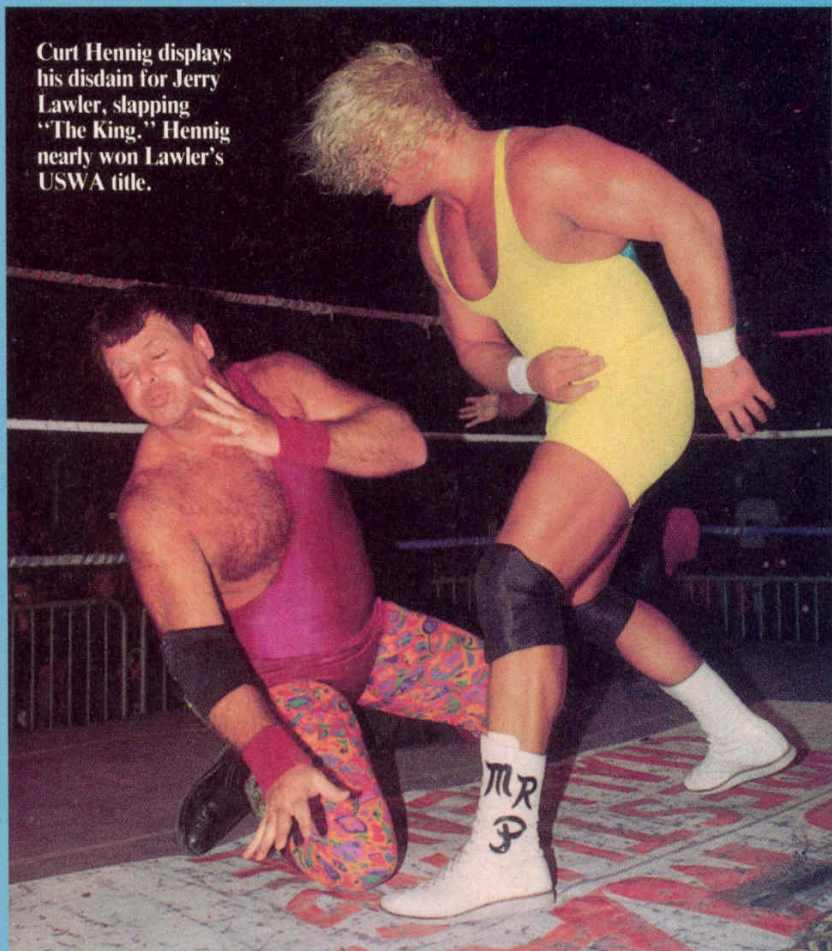
(Continued on page 52)

The Heavenly Bodies will wrestle anyone, anywhere, anytime, under any circumstances."

Every issue, reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport.

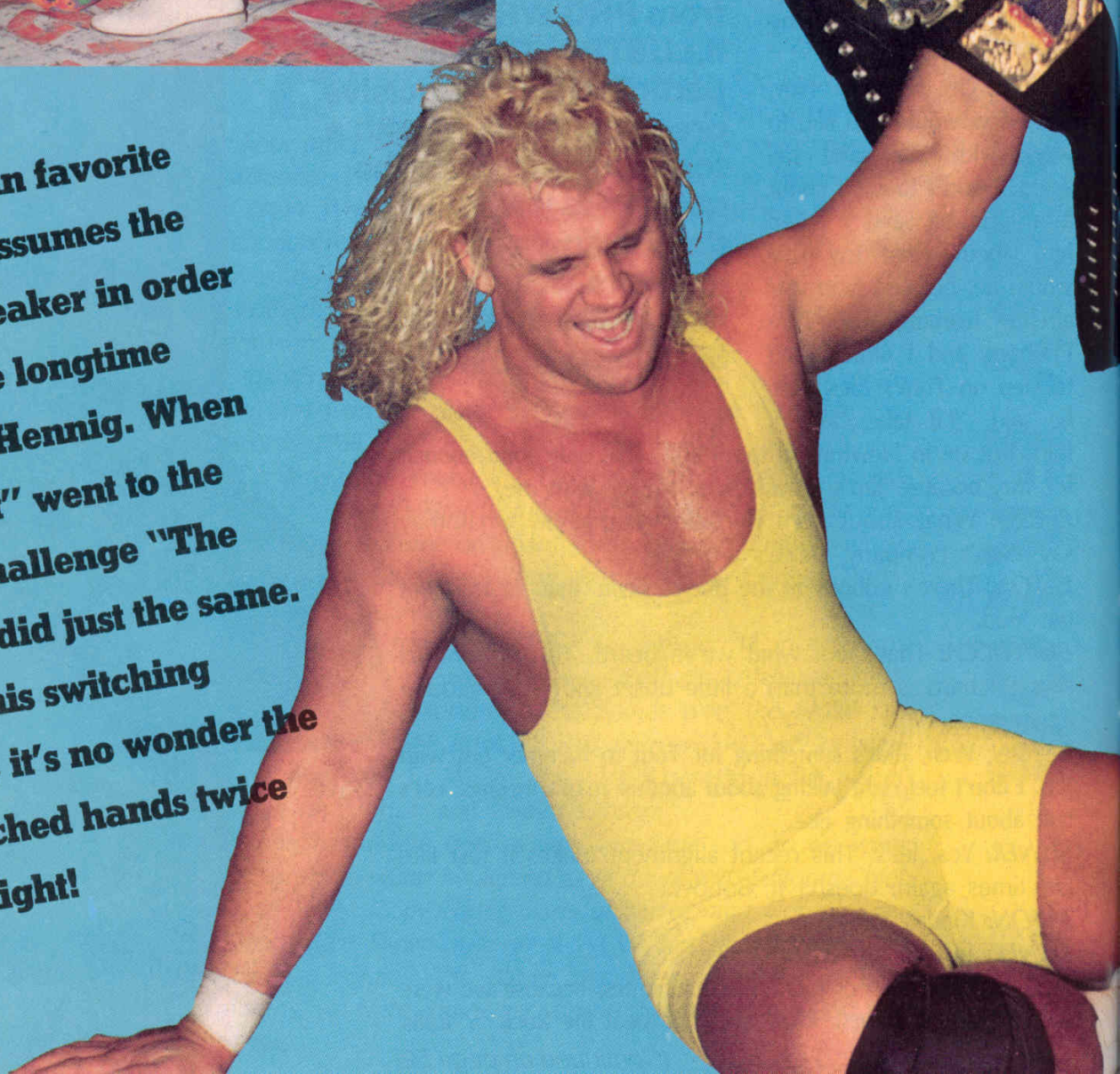


Curt Hennig displays his disdain for Jerry Lawler, slapping "The King." Hennig nearly won Lawler's USWA title.

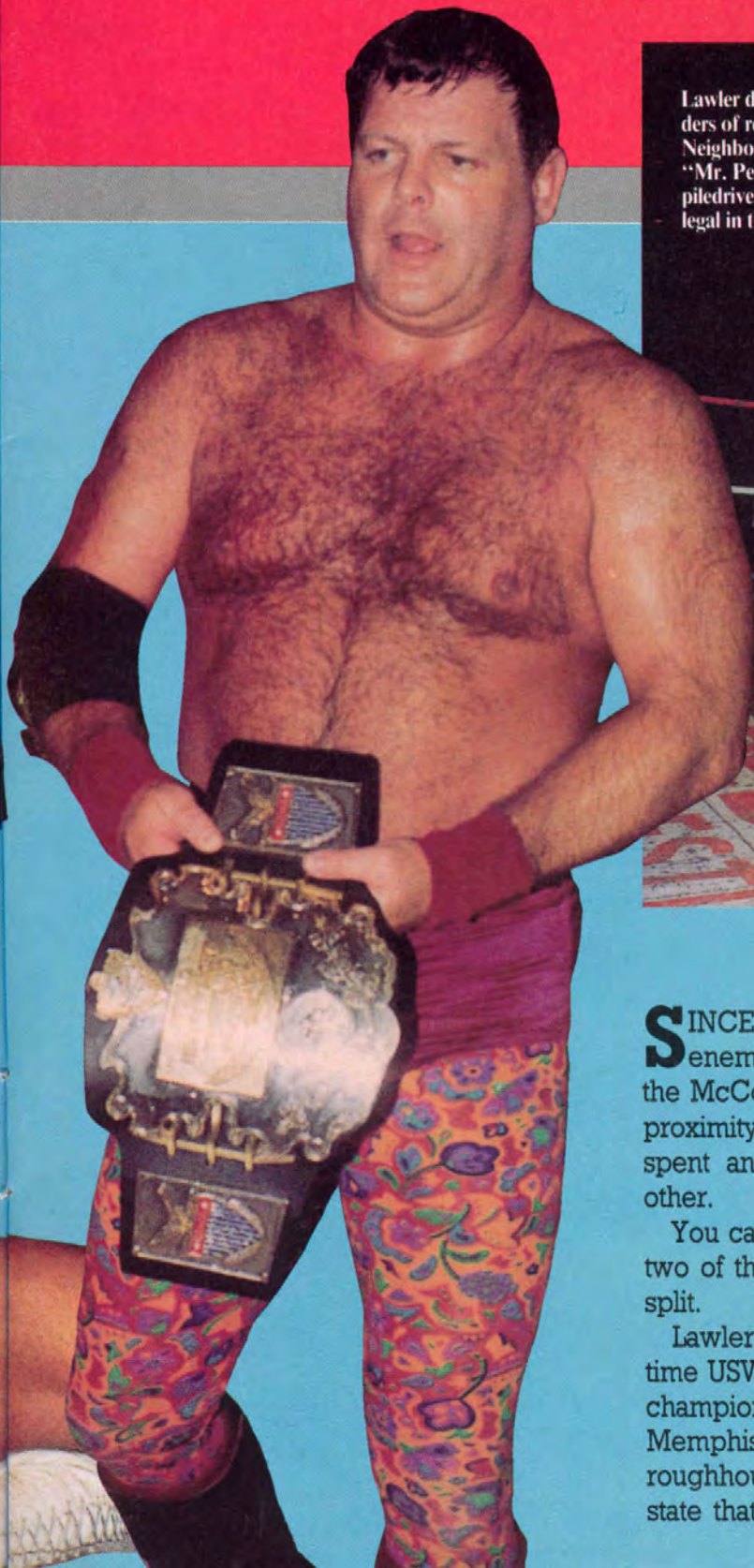


ROLE REVERSAL, TITLE REVERSAL:

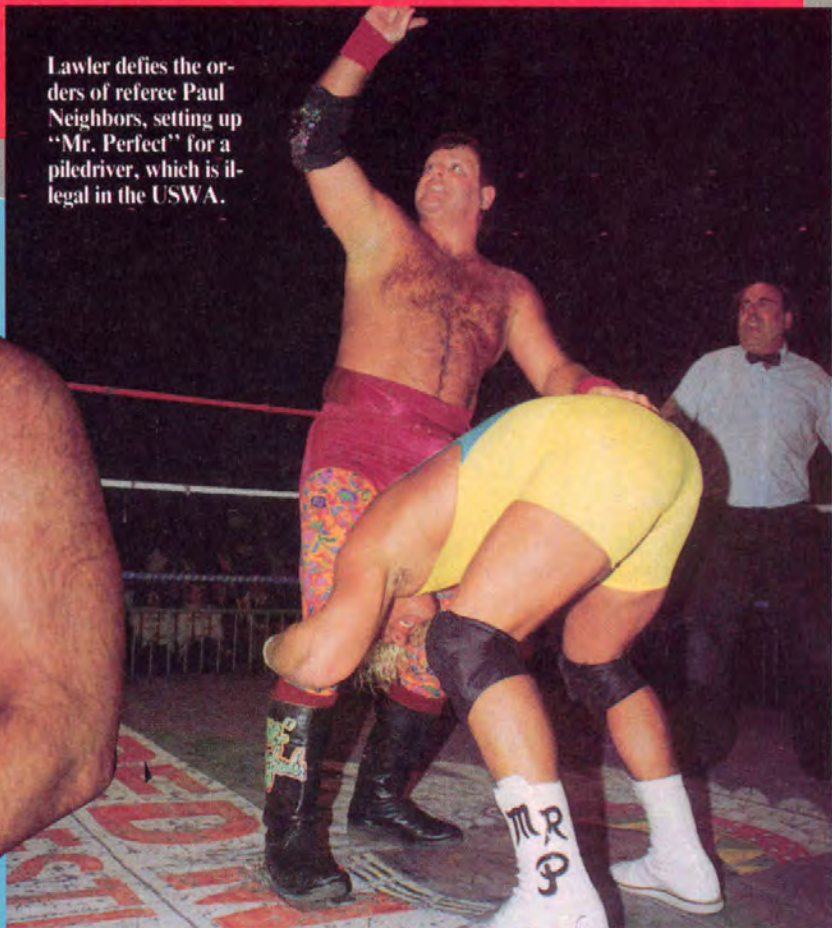
In the WWF, fan favorite Jerry Lawler assumes the role of rulebreaker in order to antagonize longtime enemy Curt Hennig. When "Mr. Perfect" went to the USWA to challenge "The King," he did just the same. With all this switching going on, it's no wonder the belt switched hands twice in one night!



JERRY LAWLER HOLDS OFF CURT HENNIG



Lawler defies the orders of referee Paul Neighbors, setting up "Mr. Perfect" for a piledriver, which is illegal in the USWA.



By Chris Bernucca

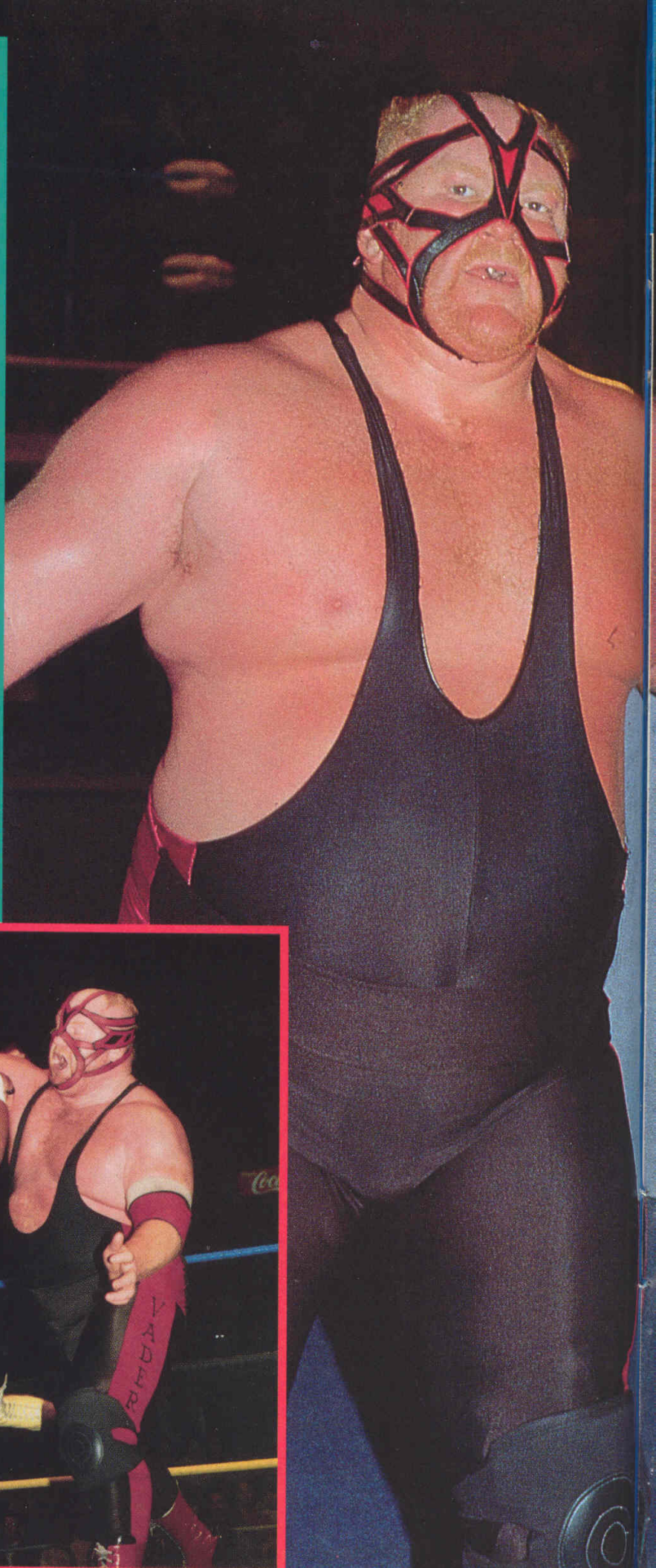
SINCE THE START of civilization, there have been mortal enemies. The Spartans and the Greeks. The Hatfields and the McCoys. The Bloods and the Crips. For whatever reasons of proximity, principle, and premise, these antagonists have always spent an inordinate amount of time and energy hating each other.

You can add Jerry Lawler and Curt Hennig to that list, too. The two of them go together about as well as ketchup on a banana split.

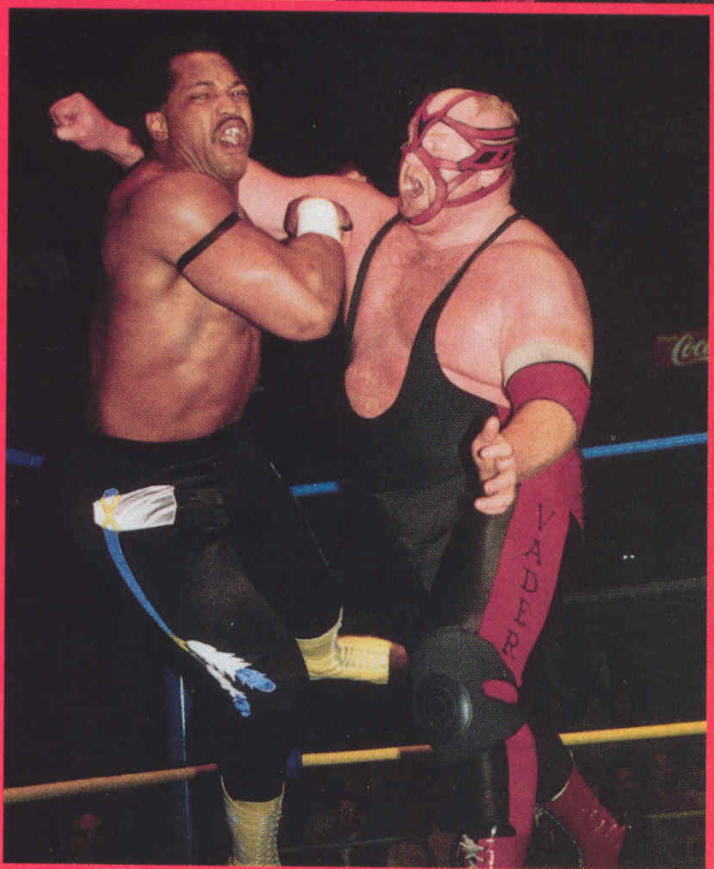
Lawler and Hennig just don't like each other. Lawler is a 12-time USWA champion. Hennig is a former WWF Intercontinental champion. Both men held the AWA World title. Lawler is from Memphis, Tennessee, a Southern city that is home to Elvis and roughhouse wrestling. Hennig is from Minnesota, a Northern state that is home to Bob Dylan and scientific grappling. Lawler

(Continued on page 54)

HAS HARLEY RACE LOST CONTROL OF BIG VAN VADER?



Angrier than ever, more obsessed than ever, and more dangerous than ever, Big Van Vader is taking ring mayhem to new levels of intensity. As WCW's juggernaut of destruction runs wild, there are wild rumors that Vader is, in fact, running out of control!



Harley Race has guided Big Van Vader to his second WCW World title—and ventured with him into the “White Castle of Fear” (right). However, there are those who say Race is no longer guiding Vader.



By Craig Peters

THE INDICATIONS ARE subtle and, in some cases, obvious. A hushed whisper. An overheard conversation. A change in regular routine. An anonymous source. All of which is more than enough to keep wrestlers throughout WCW talking.

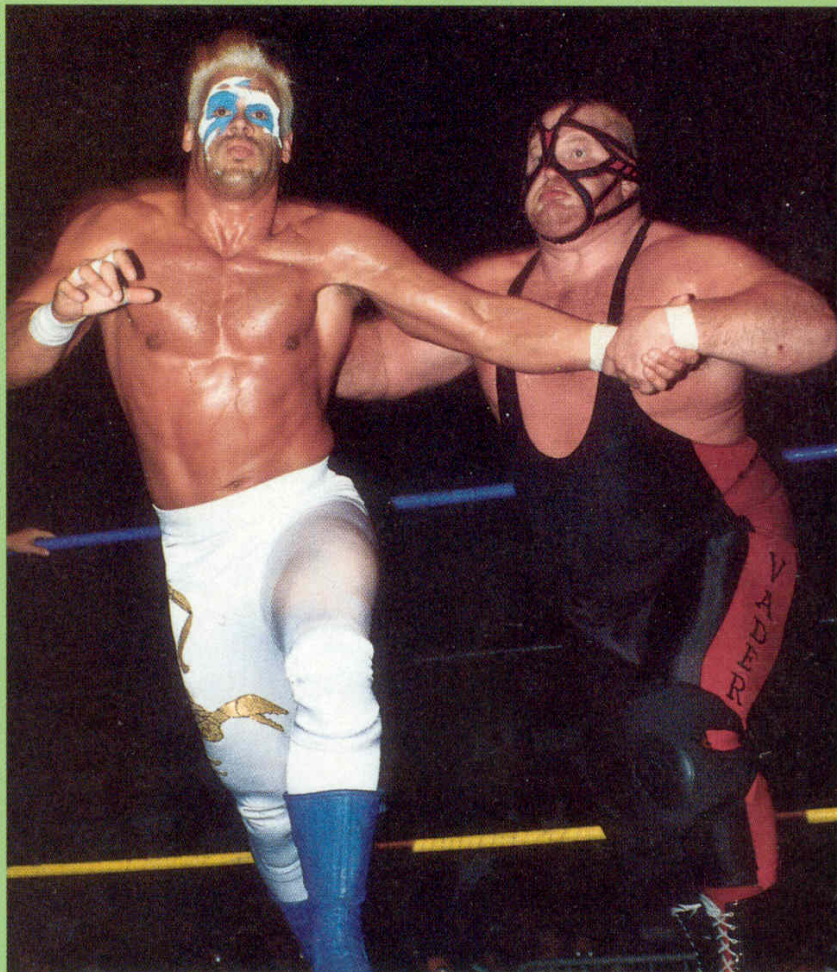
"It used to be that you'd hear about Big Van Vader and Harley Race coming to the arena together, cackling like they've just hatched some sadistic plot to rule the world," said Dustin Rhodes. "I understand that now they come to the arenas separately on most nights. And sometimes, they barely talk to each other until only a few minutes before match time."

"I've heard from a few people that Race is really upset about the fact that Vader is so obsessed with Sting," said Johnny B. Badd. "Seems that Race wants him to do less in the direction of trying to destroy Sting and more in the direction of trying to solidify his hold on the World title. I don't know if it's true or not, but I know that if I had the World belt around *my* waist, that'd be my number-one priority, bar none!"

"I was heading out of a building one night after my shower," Chris Benoit said. "I don't want to say exactly where it was, but I got a little lost. You know, the back hallways of arenas can get pretty



Vader overpowered Ron Simmons (above) to win the title, then tried to destroy him in rematches. The former NFL lineman may be more focused on crushing Sting (right) than defending his belt.



confusing sometimes. But I passed a closed door, and I'd swear it was Vader and Race screaming back and forth at each other. I got out of there pretty quickly, for obvious reasons. But best as I could tell, it had something to do with Sting."

Indeed, Vader has been obsessed with Sting, almost to the exclusion of everything else in his career. When one thinks of Vader, one thinks first of the "Stinger," and second of the WCW World heavyweight belt that the big man from Colorado is wearing for the second time.

One also thinks of an awesome machine of destruction, a powerful wrestler who has broken bones and backs and never stops going once he's chosen his target.

A large reason for Vader's WCW championship success has been Harley Race, himself a seven-time World champion. But if Race truly is losing his ability to guide Vader's career, if Vader does in fact want to forge ahead on his own without managerial guidance, WCW could be in for some big trouble.

"One thing about Race," said WCW broadcaster Jesse Ventura, "is the fact that he's able to keep his men focused. Yes, he's a great strategist, but with a guy like Vader you don't need any strategy, you just need to turn him loose. But what you *do* need is the ability to keep him focused."

"It's like breaking a wild horse," said Dustin Rhodes. "You have to keep on him, you have to

control his energies, or else he's just going to go wild and raise all kinds of hell. I'm afraid that what we're seeing now is the beginning of Vader trying to break away from Race, and that's bad for everyone in WCW. Because as much as I hate Race, he's a man who knows the value of the World title, and him keeping Vader focused on the belt keeps Vader away from doing what he wants to do naturally, which is cripple people.

"It's a fine line, I guess," Rhodes added. "Vader should deal with Sting as a title contender, not as a man to be destroyed. But he's gone over that line. He's placed the title on the back burner, and that's not Race's style at all, I don't think. That's all Vader. Just like the strap attacks before SuperBrawl III."

"The whipping of Sting with the help of Barry Windham and the hanging of Sting over the top rope—they were both definitely Vader's ideas," said one rulebreaker who chose to remain anonymous. "In fact, I know for a fact that Harley wanted to lowball his man going into SuperBrawl III, sort of lay back and let Sting come to Vader instead of having Vader be so aggressive before the match. That whole White Castle of Fear invitation—all Vader. Seems to me that Harley's losing control of his man. That's bad for Harley—but good for Vader, who's gonna chew up guys like Sting and Dustin and all the rest of them and spit them out like

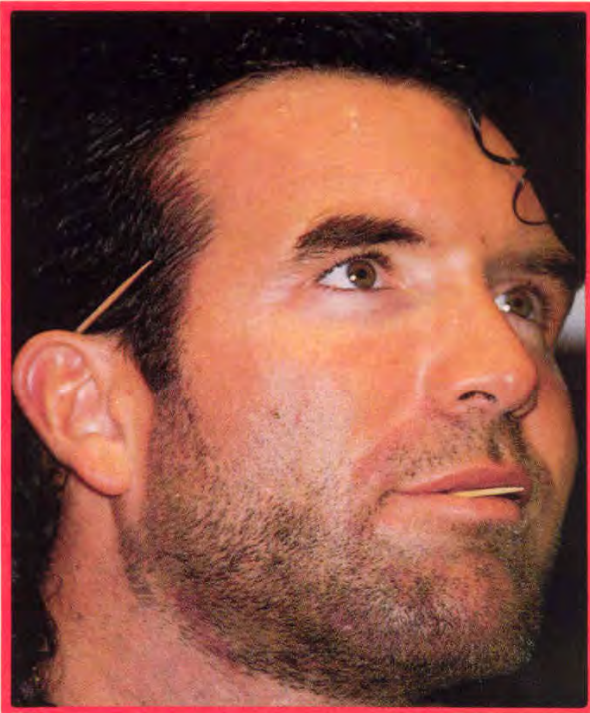
(Continued on page 67)

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

CLOSE-UP

RAZOR RAMON

RAZOR RAMON ranks among the most controversial competitors the sport today . . . Stands 6'8" and weighs 291 pounds—and every ounce of it is pure muscle . . . Famous for his arrogant swagger and mocking interview style . . . Makes up for poor balance with exceptional strength . . . Most WWF fans think of Ramon as a relative newcomer, but this man is a nine-year veteran, competing under various names, including his real one, Scott Hall . . . Father is Lt. Col. Henry Hall, and Scott spent his formative years as an Army brat . . . Attended an American high school in Germany . . . Starred in basketball at St. Mary's University in Maryland . . . Followed his friend, 6'8" Dan Spivey, into the sport in 1984 . . . Both were discovered by Barry Windham in Florida as they were shopping in a grocery store . . . Spivey and Hall trained together in North Carolina and Florida with the idea of forming a tag team . . . Assisted in training by Harley Race and Pat O'Connor, and later by Curt Hennig and Rick Martel, all former world champions . . . Made 1984 debut as The American Starship . . . Hall was known as Starship Coyote, while Spivey used the name Starship Eagle . . . Duo debuted with an impressive victory over Marty Jannetty and "Bulldog" Bob Brown . . . The team enjoyed a moderate amount of success in the Mid-Atlantic and Central States regions before disbanding . . . Scored a victory over former WWF World champion "Superstar" Billy Graham in 1985 . . . At this point, Hall tired of competing under the name of Coyote—and as a rulebreaker . . . Moved to the AWA as Scott Hall, where he was an immediate sensation . . . Scored countout victories over former AWA champions Nick Bockwinkel and Larry Zbyszko . . . Won a bloody feud against Russian sadist Boris Zukhov . . . Formed a team with Hennig, a move that would have both immediate and far-reaching implications . . . Popular duo won the AWA World tag team title from Jim Garvin and Steve Regal on January 18, 1986, in Albuquerque, New Mexico . . . Hennig and Hall enjoyed five dominant months until one of the most controversial decisions in history robbed them of the title . . . Hall and Hennig took on the unheralded, out-of-shape team of Buddy Rose and Doug Somers (managed by "Sensational" Sherri Martel) on May 17, 1986, in Hammond, Indiana . . . During the bout, South African rulebreaker Col. DeBeers interfered, eventually ramming Hall's head into the ringpost outside the ring . . . Hall was counted out, and the referee shocked the fans by handing the belts to Rose and Somers . . . Never before had a title in a major federation changed hands on a countout . . . Hall and Hennig protested the decision, but AWA President Stanley Blackburn refused to overturn it . . . Defeated DeBeers in a series of grudge matches, but Hall's career seemed to flounder following the loss of the tag team championship . . . Moved on to Florida, where



he defeated Kevin Sullivan and Kareem Muhammad . . . Challenged Lex Luger, but Luger left for the area before the match could be signed . . . Traveled next to Japan and the CWA in Memphis, but failed to contend for a championship in either area . . . Entered the NWA as "Gator" Scott Hall in 1989, but fared poorly . . . Could not make it past mid-card status, and hit his low point by losing televised matches to Terry Funk and Sid Vicious . . . Wrestled on and off in Florida for more than one year, and at one point took off several months to regroup . . . Met manager "Diamond" Dallas Page in Florida during late-1990, and it turned out to be the best association of Hall's career . . . Page gave Hall a complete makeover, including slick-backed hair and dark glasses . . . Changed name to The Diamond Studd and re-entered WCW in 1991 . . . Became famous for prematch ritual of allowing women from the audience to rip off his warmup pants . . . It was his first stint as a rulebreaker since the Starship days, and he relished it . . . Started employing the "Diamond death drop," which he would ultimately rename the "Razor's edge" . . . For

the first time in two years, started scoring big victories . . . Feud with Tom Zenk was one of 1991's highlights . . . Disappeared from WCW in early-'92, and his whereabouts were unknown . . . Entered the WWF for the first time in mid-'92, but this time as Razor Ramon . . . Developed a pronounced swagger, as well as an unexplained Hispanic accent . . . Seemed twice as brutal as Studd, and the wins began piling up . . . Beat Virgil, Jim Brunzell, and Tito Santana as he rose in the ratings . . . Developed a working relationship with Bobby Heenan, Ric Flair, and Curt Hennig . . . From the moment he entered the WWF, claimed he—not Randy Savage—was the *real* "Macho Man" of the federation . . . Interfered in the match when Flair regained the WWF World title from Savage on September 1 in Hershey, Pennsylvania, and attacked Savage after the bout, causing a serious knee injury . . . Dominated the injured Savage in the ensuing feud, but the bouts were marred by outside interference by Flair . . . When Hennig left Heenan's employment after an on-camera blowup on *WWF Prime Time Wrestling*, Ramon quickly became Flair's biggest ally . . . Ramon and Flair lost to Hennig and Randy Savage by disqualification at Survivor Series '92, but Ramon continued making his way up the rankings as a single . . . Earned a match against WWF World champion Bret Hart in the main event of Royal Rumble '93, but lost by submission when Hart tied him up in his "sharpshooter" leglock . . . Engaged in a feud against Big Bossman, and won it convincingly . . . Challenged Hennig to a series of bouts, which have been even thus far . . . Armed with his new attitude and wealth of physical attributes, figures to be among the WWF elite for quite some time. □



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CLOSE-UP



FAVORITE MANEUVER

"Razor's edge" slam. Formerly known as the "Diamond death drop" in WCW, this incredible finisher ranks with the power bomb as one of the most devastating slams in the sport. Ramon lifts his opponent from under the shoulders, then drops straight down facefirst, sending his foe's head and back crashing to the mat. It's a miracle more men haven't been crippled by this calculatingly cruel maneuver.

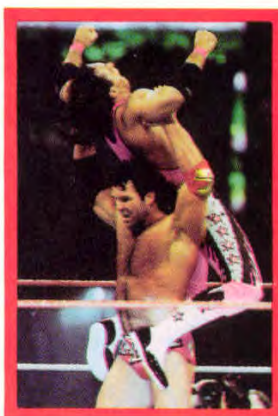


MOST HATED OPPONENT

Curt Hennig. Ramon is grateful to Bobby Heenan and Ric Flair for resurrecting his career. So when "Mr. Perfect" turned against Hennig and Flair, Ramon took it upon himself to challenge Hennig with everything he had. Thus far, the raging hatred between these competitors has prevented a clear winner of this feud, which figures to last a long, long time.

GREATEST MATCH

September 10, 1992, vs. Randy Savage. Fans who recalled Ramon's lean years would forget all about them following his convincing victory over the "Macho Man." Although the bout was marred by outside interference by Ric Flair, the win put Ramon's name among the elite WWF competitors, and it gave him the confidence he needed to contend for the World title.



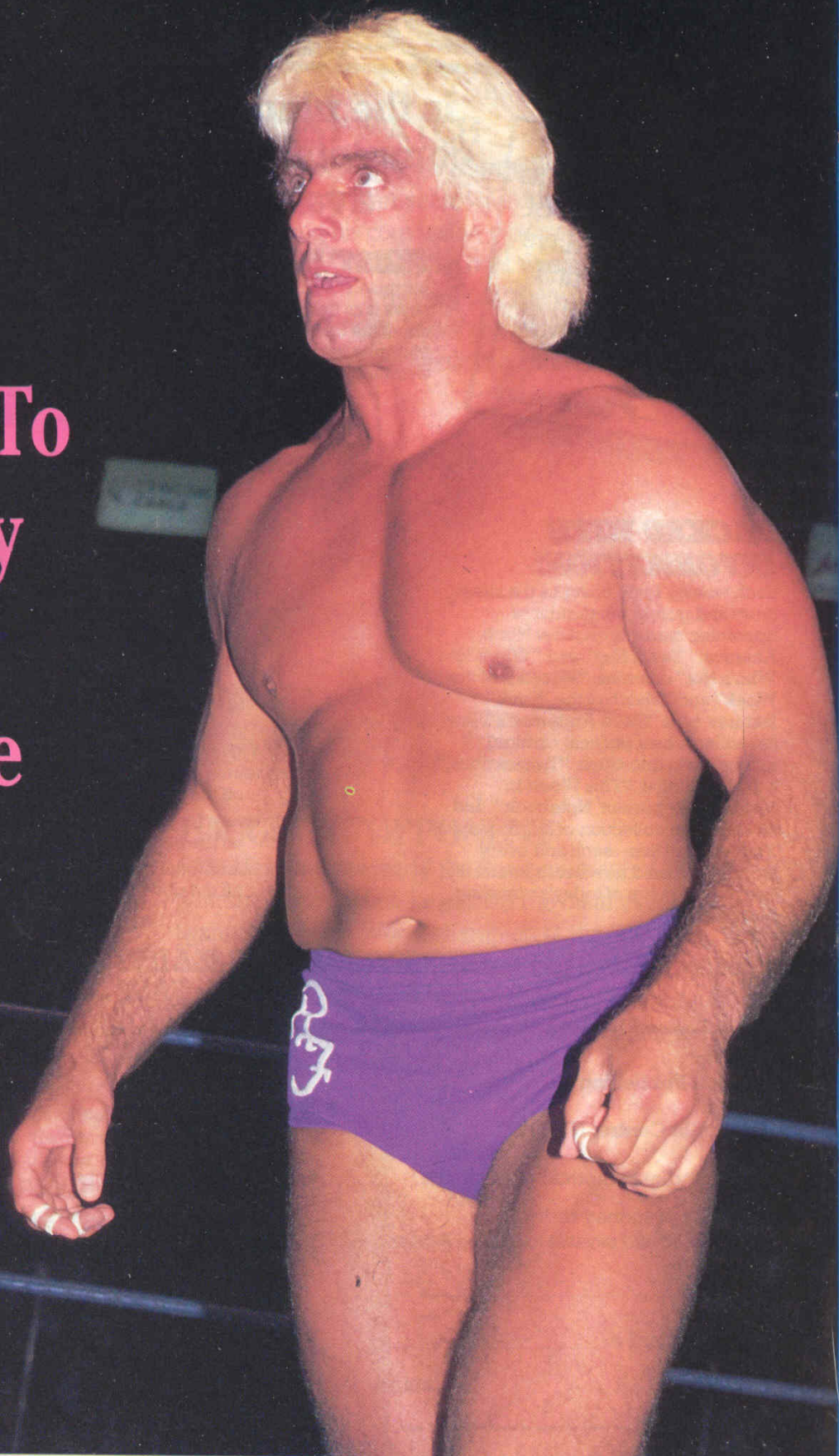
TOUGHEST OPPONENT

Bret Hart. It was clearly the finest moment of Ramon's career when he earned the main event against the WWF World champion at the Survivor Series, but even Hart's staunchest fans never expected Ramon to submit to the "sharpshooter." Ramon must figure a way to counter this leglock if he is ever to take Hart's spot as the federation's top man.



Ric Flair's

Why
All Of
WCW
Wants To
Destroy
The
"Nature
Boy"



HELLISH HOMECOMING

By Andy Rodriguez

RIC FLAIR FIDGETED nervously as his limousine pulled up to the side entrance of the arena. He was visible because the window of the limo was rolled wide open. It is unusual for the "Nature Boy" to keep his window open.

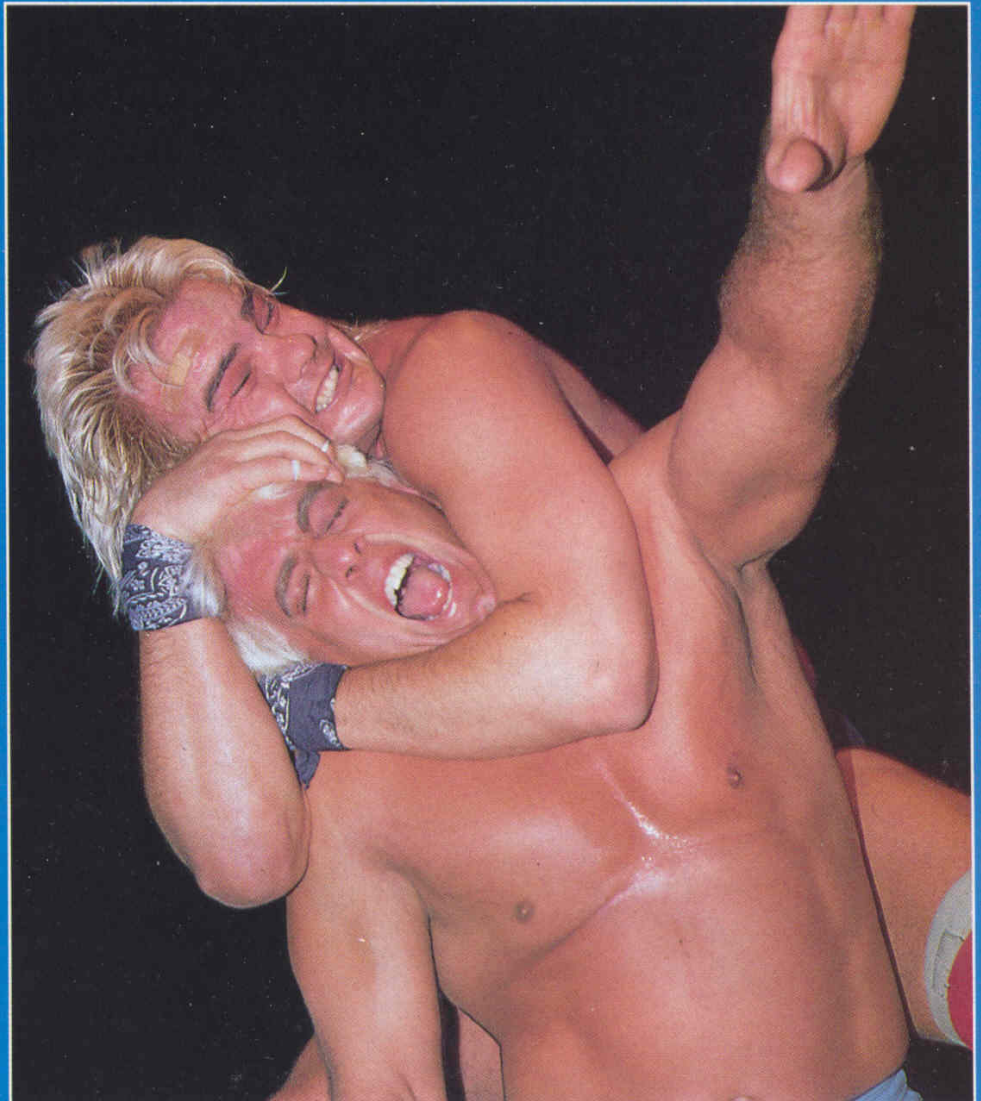
Flair finds himself in a very unusual position these days.

"Hey, champ!" a reporter shouted. "How do you feel tonight?"

"I feel like not answering your question, smart guy!" Flair shot back. "How do you like that?"

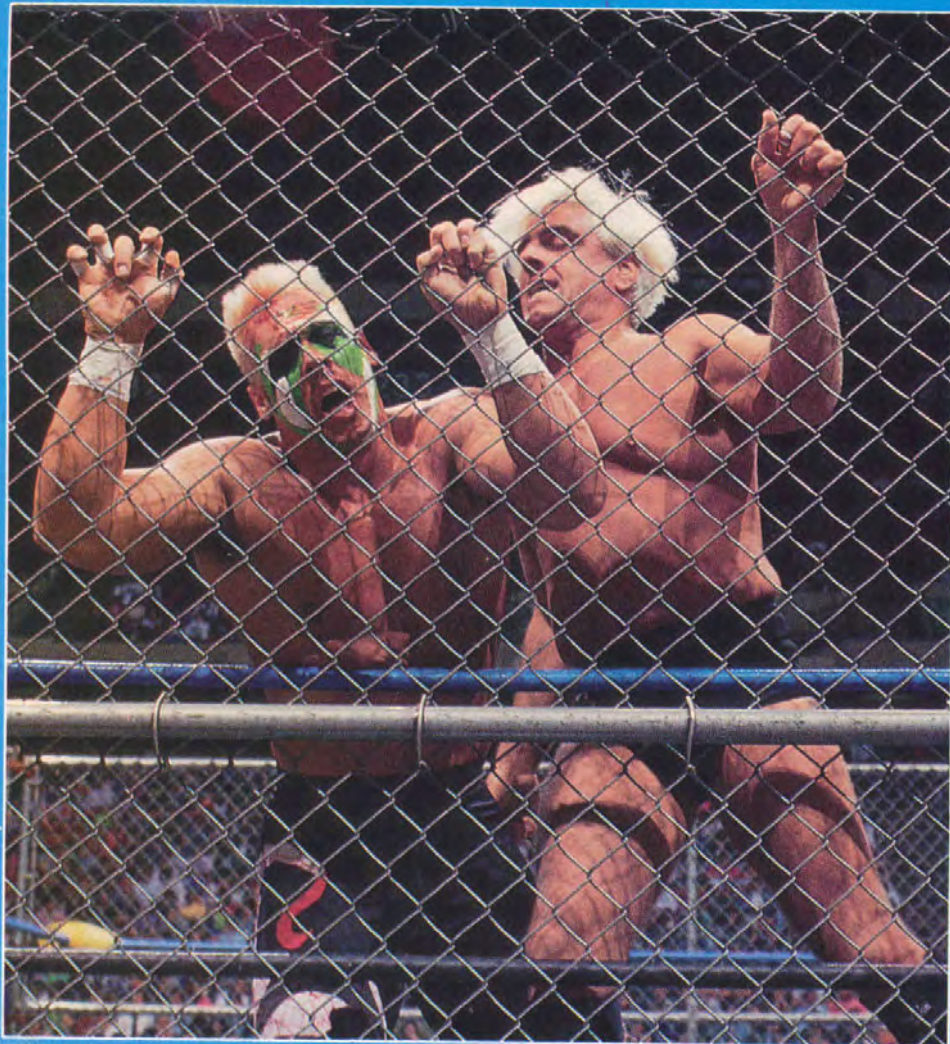
Why the edginess? The seven-time former NWA/WCW World champion is being targeted by people who were supposed to overlook past differences and embrace him like a long-lost child. It hasn't worked out that way; the fan favorites still hate Flair, no matter what he may do to appease them.

He is also on the hit lists of men who once had at least a grudging respect for him. Now, because that respect rarely translated into friendship, and because he openly opposes their aims, Flair is being targeted by *them*, too.



Ric Flair (opposite) can count on having plenty of enemies upon returning to WCW. Some of those enemies may be men the "Nature Boy" once considered friends, like Barry Windham (above).

Every top wrestler in WCW wants a piece of Ric Flair. His old enemies don't care if he's changed his ways, and the new ones are determined to tarnish his legend. The "Nature Boy" has never traveled a more dangerous road to the WCW World title



Sting (above) remembers what Flair is capable of from his days with The Four Horsemen. Brian Pillman (below) has had trouble with Flair in the past, but isn't intimidated by him now.

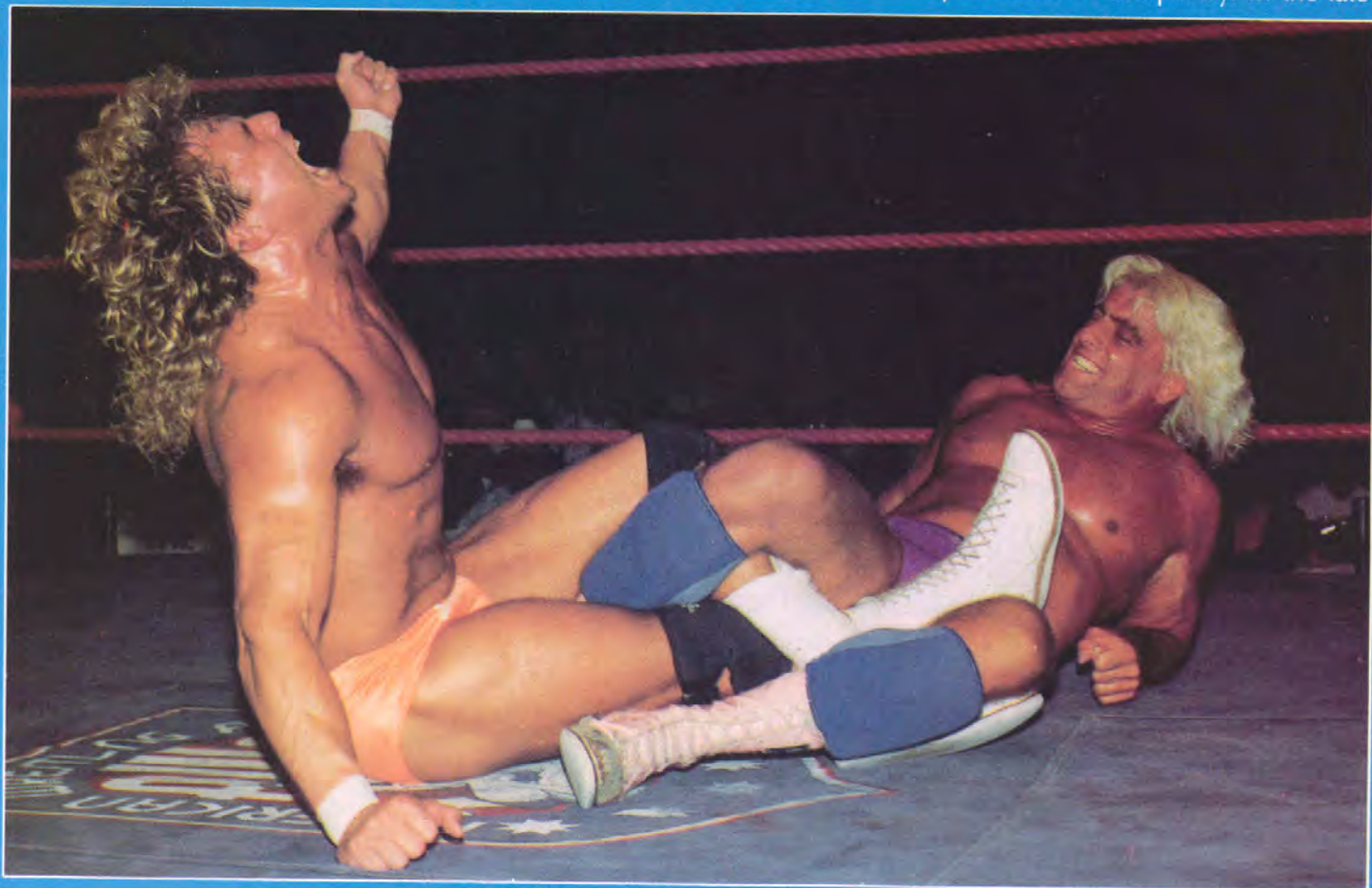
Flair is accustomed to having half of any federation against him at any one time. But an entire organization? That spells trouble, in River City and everywhere else.

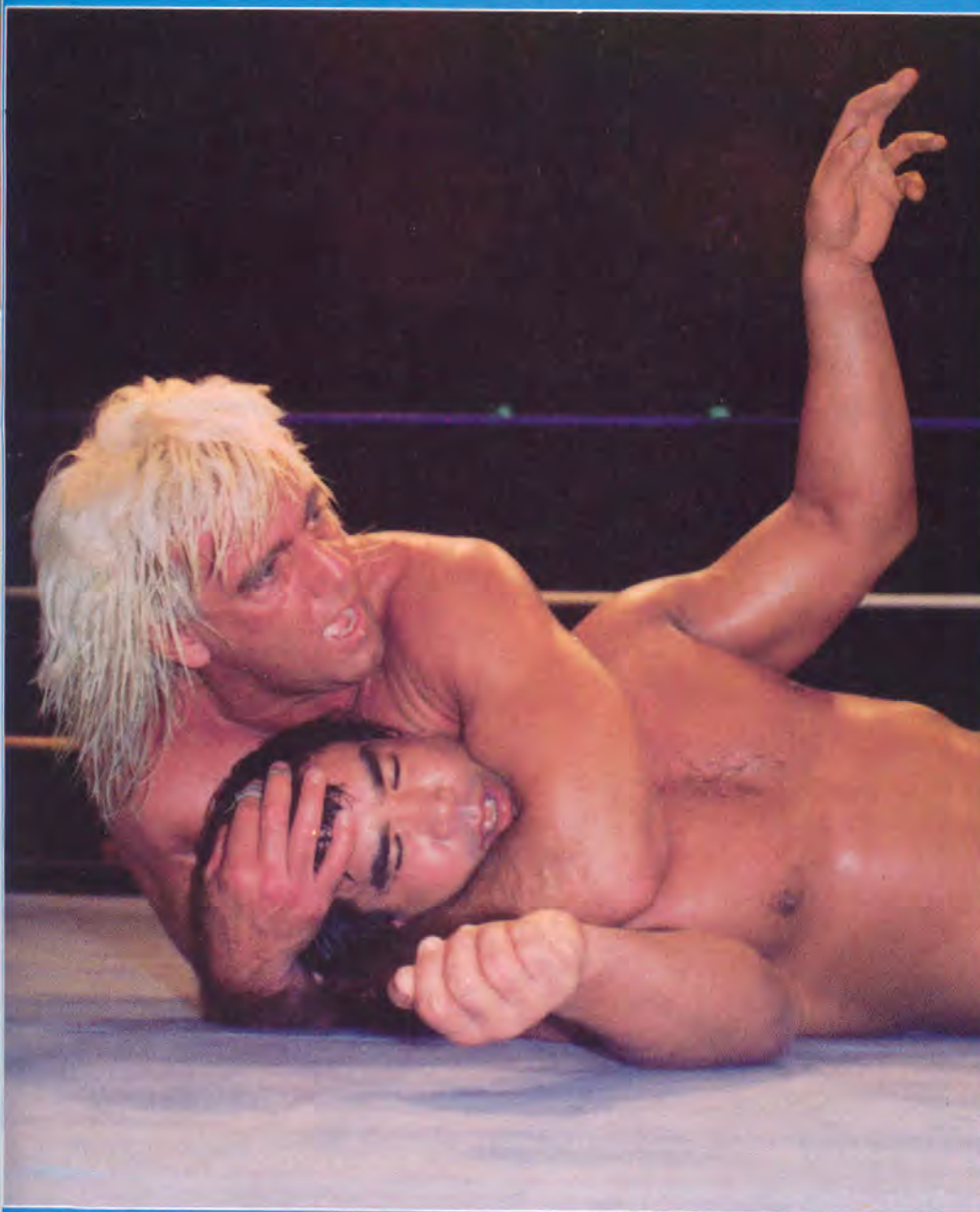
"He isn't exactly welcome here," admitted Sting, who nevertheless counts himself among those willing to give Flair a chance. "Anybody who remembers the heyday of The Four Horsemen knows what he's capable of. He's kind of a legend among rulebreakers, and he deserves to be. I'm almost tempted to feel sorry for the guy. Almost."

"What is Flair's problem?" asked Harley Race. "He could be welcomed back here like a conquering hero. Instead, he decides he's got a whole new agenda. Doesn't make any sense to me. Well, he'll just have to pay for that mistake."

Clearly, it's going to be very difficult for Flair to find any solid allies. He may profess to go it alone, but that usually is not the way he operates.

Part of Flair's genius lies in his uncanny ability to forge alliances, either permanent or temporary. In the late-





The matches in the 1980s between Flair and Rick Steamboat were classics. But Flair is getting on in years and may no longer have what it takes to put the clamps on "The Dragon."

1980s, there were The Four Horsemen. The members of that rule-breaking elite may have varied (Lex Luger, Barry Windham, and Sid Vicious were the more prominent "temps"), but the principle was clear: Protect Flair. Make sure he stays champion, at any cost.

Immediately upon joining the WWF, he hooked up with Bobby Heenan, possessor of one of the sport's most brilliant (and devious) minds. Even those who despise Flair hailed this move as a masterstroke, realizing that Heenan was one of the few men who could get Flair WWF World title matches against Hulk Hogan.

Later, of course, Flair hooked up

with Heenan's other cohort, "Mr. Perfect" Curt Hennig. And when that alliance went awry, Flair turned to Razor Ramon for aid and comfort.

This time, it's different. This time, Flair apparently has no one on whom to rely.

Arn Anderson, his old Four Horsemen cohort, has begged off.

"Ric's battles don't concern me anymore," Anderson said. "I have my own affairs to worry about. Flair is perfectly capable of fending for himself. The man is one of the greats in our business."

To those who question Anderson's loyalty, he has only words of contempt.

"Loyalty to Flair? I wouldn't give

that and he wouldn't expect it," Arn snapped. "Listen, down the road I might be willing to give him a hand, sure. But I don't see anything permanent."

Windham is another ex-partner of Flair's who isn't crying about the "Nature Boy's" dilemma.

"Flair made a conscious decision to leave," he opined, "and a conscious decision to come back the way he did. Knowing Ric how I do, I think he's planned things out very carefully. He doesn't make choices lightly. He weighs his options completely."

Perhaps one option was a decision *not* to gather allies, at least not immediately. Considering Flair's entire career, that would not be extraordinary. He captured his first three NWA World titles without a manager, adviser, or group backing him up.

However, that was a younger "Nature Boy." Flair still is one of the top wrestlers in the world, but most experts would agree he is past his prime. At this point in his career, he needs help and he needs it badly.

"Unless Flair gets some people behind him and fast," Brian Pillman offered, "he'll be just another guy in WCW looking for the belt. Reputation will only carry Flair so far. He has to win those matches. And with people like *me* looking for matches against him, I don't envy him."

Many more WCW competitors share Pillman's sentiments. They want to make his homecoming as difficult as possible. His accomplishments won't protect him against the onslaught of the angry mob.

"It's a hellish predicament," offered Race. "He'll need all those championship skills and talents to help him through. I wouldn't underestimate him, but I wouldn't be telling him not to worry, either."

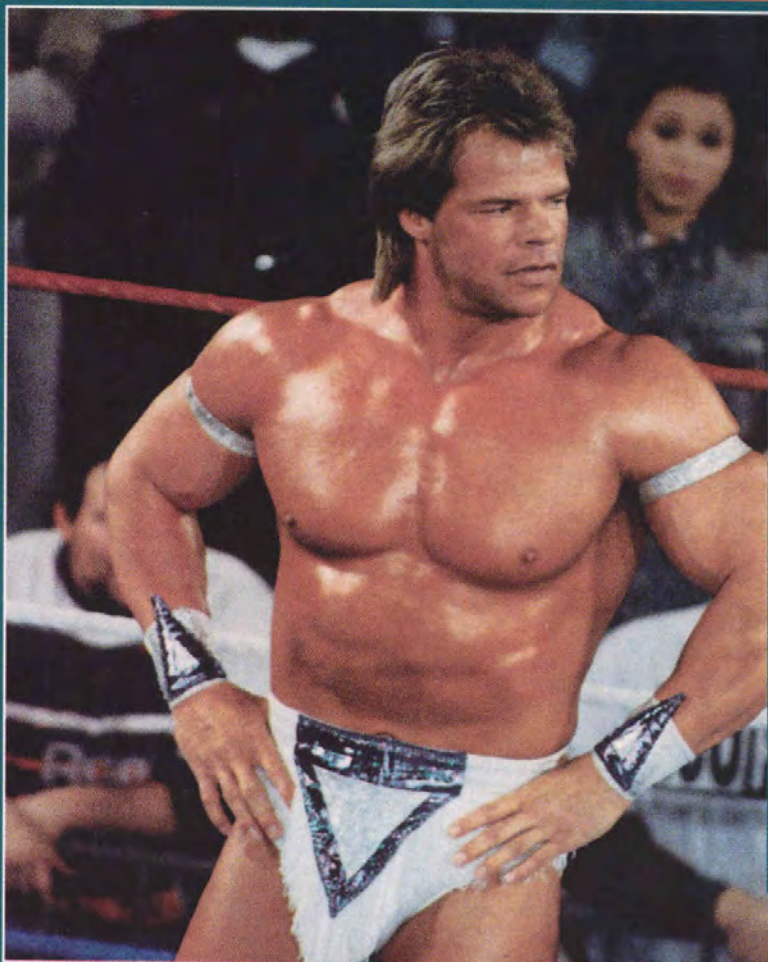
Such muddled advice is not what Flair wants or needs. He needs a way to get out of this mess—and emerge as WCW World champion once again.

It's getting hotter every day. □

Mirror, Mirror ONE OF THESE MEN



Shawn Michaels



Lex Luger

In the WWF, where it is better to look good than to feel good, no one looks better than Lex Luger. Except, perhaps, Curt Hennig. And Shawn Michaels. And Razor Ramon. With these four braggarts, the WWF could hold a pay-per-view event called Clash of the Egos. But who would win? More importantly, who would lose?

By Chris Bernucca

IT WAS THE longest introduction in WWF history, and it took place on February 1 at the Manhattan Center in

New York. The "Narcissist" Lex Luger, to the soft, synthesized sounds of his entrance music, posed and preened in

front of a full-length mirror for a good 12 minutes prior to his match against Tony DeVito.

On The Wall... IS DUE FOR A FALL



Curt Hennig



Razor Ramon

However, only the live audience was subjected to this torture. At the same time, the television audience was subjected to a lengthy taped feature on "Mr. Perfect" Curt Hennig and his "awesome" football skills, testified to by Minnesota Vikings tight end Steve Jordan.

Luger's actions are nothing new. In fact, Shawn Michaels may be mobilizing his lawyers as this story is being

written. You see, it was Michaels who began bringing a mirror to the ring with him last year, in order to admire his handiwork.

And Hennig's display is just an extension of his runaway ego, a characteristic prevalent in Razor Ramon, a former stablemate of Hennig's who parlayed his bodacious braggadocio into World title matches.

It's hard to say which of these four

men is hardest to stomach, but one thing is for sure: At least one, and possibly all four, are headed for disappointing setbacks in the near future that should puncture their overinflated egos.

"When you're Luger or Michaels and you think that much of yourself, it's not enough just to win," offers WWF expert Thomas Pilliard. "You have to look good doing it and totally



As Intercontinental champion, Shawn Michaels (left) has more to lose than any of the WWF's resident egomaniacs. "Narcissist" Lex Luger (above) isn't used to losing, having won the WCW World title in 1991.

humiliate your opponent, so the audience thinks there's only one man in the ring.

"The idea of losing never crosses their mind," continued Pilliard. "They don't think that way. Ultimately, that will be their downfall. But they're not aware of that now. If one of these guys lost a big match, I'd put them on suicide watch."

Granted, none of these men lose very often. Luger was WCW World champion prior to joining the WWF. Hennig is a former AWA World champion, Intercontinental champion, and successful manager. Michaels is a former AWA World tag team champion (with Marty Jannetty) who has found fame and riches of his own in his current reign as Intercontinental champ. And Ramon is a former AWA World tag team champion who enjoyed a six-month unbeaten streak in the second half of 1992.

Those are all very impressive statistics, and as former baseball great Dizzy Dean once said, it ain't braggin' if you can do it. But there may be underlying reasons for the boastful behavior from this gang of four.

"Most people who call attention to themselves, whether it be their looks, their skills, or their deeds, are usually hiding the fact that they are very insecure," observed noted wrestling psychologist Dr. Sidney M. Basil. "They are often found to have low self-esteem and mask it with the exact opposite behavior, in hopes that it will create a new, more positive personality. Unfortunately, all it becomes is a facade, and the lack of self-esteem continues to fester."

So which one of these four men is getting ready to tumble? The one who could fall furthest is Michaels, the only current champion among the group. He is blessed with incredible talent,

which he sometimes takes for granted.

Recent non-title losses to Bob Backlund and Tatanka ought to be a warning sign that he must put more work into match preparation. However, it seems that Michaels' idea of match preparation is making sure his hair is properly coiffed.

Ramon has very little to lose because he has yet to win a title in the WWF. He is very proud of his image as a roughneck from the streets of Miami who wears gold chains and takes what he wants. In 1992, he thrashed Randy Savage, usurping his unofficial title of "Macho Man."

Ramon considers himself the ultimate he-man in the WWF universe, but recently, the losses have been mounting. WWF World champion Bret Hart handled him at the Royal Rumble, and Hennig and Tatanka have beaten him since. The gold that dangles from Ramon's neck is losing



Curt Hennig (left) calls himself "Mr. Perfect," but he was less than perfect in this match against Razor Ramon (below left). Both men have inflated opinions of themselves.



its luster.

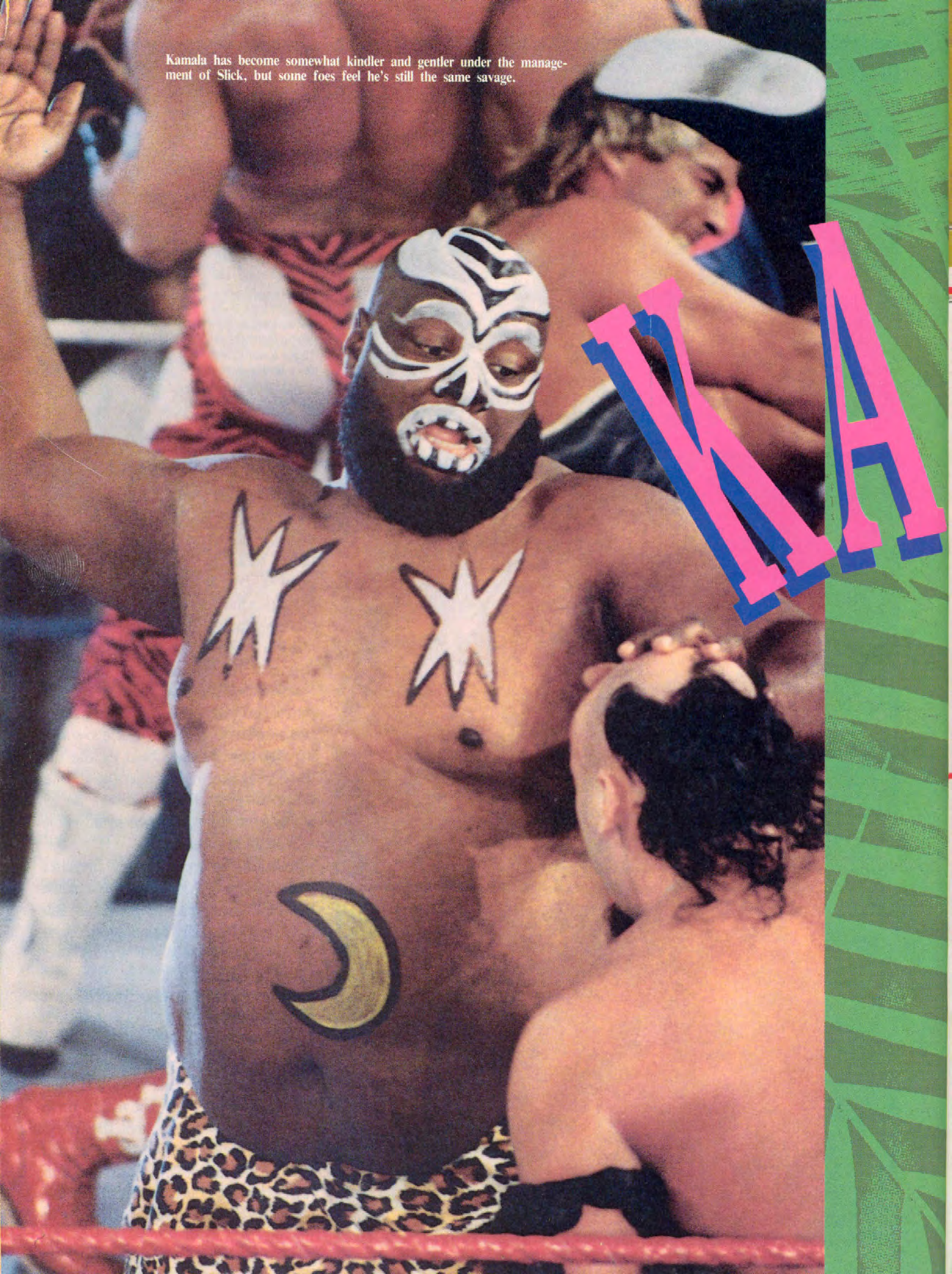
The most interesting situation exists between Luger and Hennig, who were scheduled to face each other at WrestleMania IX. Sources close to Luger reveal that the "Narcissist" was livid upon discovering that his prolonged introduction was not only not televised, but pre-empted by the taped Hennig feature.

It is unlikely that the bout between Luger and Hennig will end in a draw. As Pilliard pointed out, neither man is accustomed to anything but ego-stroking victories; a draw would expose the inability to win, rather than the resolve not to lose. Each man will call on all of his supreme confidence in an effort to belittle the other.

Outside the ring, Hennig preaches perfection in presence and personality. But he is not afraid to get down and dirty once the bell rings, as evidenced by his loser-leaves-WWF victory over fellow egomaniac Ric Flair. "Mr. Perfect" wrestled a perfect match in a battle in which a loss would have been the ultimate indignity.

To be sure, Luger has all the exteriors. But as is often the case, it is what lies inside these men that makes them champions. Let's hope that the WrestleMania match between Luger and Hennig is a knock-down, drag-out, dirt-under-the-fingernails affair. Then we will have a better look at the man in the mirror. □

Kamala has become somewhat kinder and gentler under the management of Slick, but some foes feel he's still the same savage.



THE "NEW"

KAMALA

By Andy Rodriguez

HUMAN ENOUGH TO BE CHAMPION?

There are those who will not even acknowledge Kamala is a human being with thoughts and feelings. They insist he will never be anything more than a jungle savage. Even when he proves them wrong, Kamala will be faced with a more difficult challenge: demonstrating he is fit to hold a World title

A PROMINENT WWF star recently was asked who he thought would be the most unlikely world champion.

"That's easy," he responded quickly. "Kamala. I can't imagine him representing the WWF. What an embarrassment that would be. Even worse than Doink, and that's pretty bad."

Notice that the respondent said nothing about Kamala's wrestling *ability*. He was more concerned with the *image* the "Ugandan Giant" would present the fans and how that image would affect (adversely, he felt) the WWF.

For Slick, that presents a significant problem. He not only must convince Kamala to change his ways completely, he (and Kamala) must convince the wrestling community and the fans that he is worthy of being champion.

Tough task.

From the moment he made his professional wrestling debut, Kamala has been vilified for excessive savagery. He has hospitalized dozens of opponents and injured many more.

Throughout all this, a host of advisers, handlers, and managers have spurred him on, caring only about covering themselves with glory at his expense. It was not until late in 1992, when Slick got hold of him, that Kamala finally began to show some decorum.

This start toward being accepted as a wrestler, and not just some guy who beats up people in the ring, was a necessary first step. Slick has asked him to live up to a new standard of success. Success used to mean how well he hurt opponents. Now it means how much progress he has made toward a title shot.

However, the question remains: Would Kamala appreciate what it entails to be a World champion in the WWF? A look at his recent career may be instructive.

Between November 1991 and May 1992, Kamala enjoyed four reigns as USWA champion, defeating Jerry Lawler twice and Koko B.

(Continued on page 66)

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BETWEEN FALLS

(Continued from page 7)

the one responsible for this. Barry Windham could be coming after you!

ADAM SCEPANIAC

Baltimore

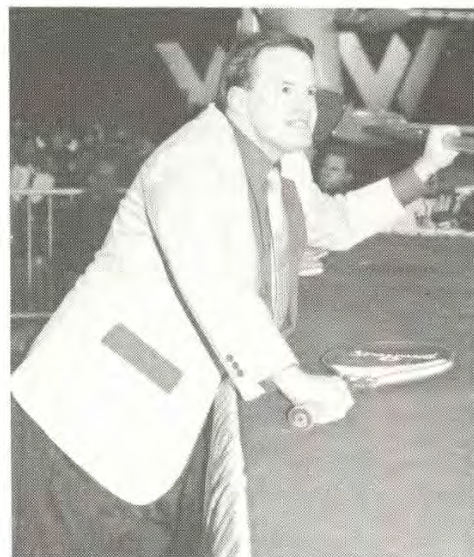
Texas Turncoat? *Texas Turncoat?* Where do you get off calling Barry Windham a traitor?

Fact: Young Dustin Rhodes refused to pin the inadvertently injured Rick Steamboat. Basically, Dustin lost the match, two tag team titles, and, most importantly, the winners' share of the purse.

Texas Turncoat? You biased people should have saved that name for the Dustin poster.

K.C. DARKHARTE

Biloxi, MS



Jim Cornette has a big mouth, and if he's not careful about what he says, someone is going to close it for him, voices reader Warren Blainey.

see you with that fat mouth wired shut. You'd probably explode!

WARREN BLAINEY

Shreveport, LA

DON'T BLOW YOUR HORN

Jim Cornette, I have a little advice for you: Shut up!

You're always saying something stupid and getting yourself in trouble. I would think that, by now, you would have learned something in this game. One day, somebody is going to get so mad at you, you'll be lucky if you can eat through a straw.

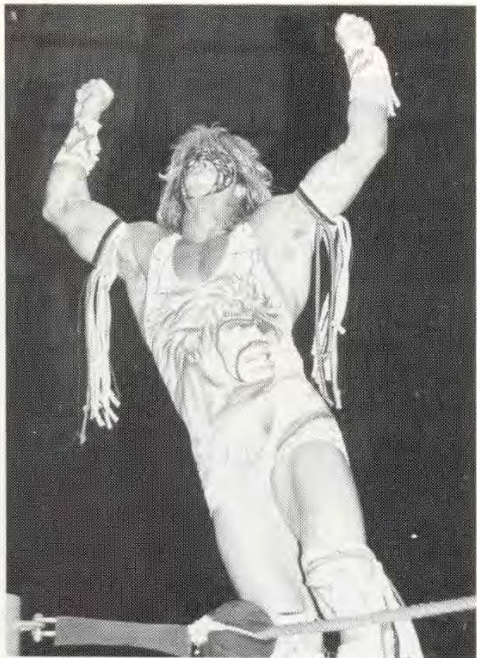
Come to think of it, I'd love to

THE ULTIMATE CHOICE

I was greatly disappointed when I found out that The Ultimate Warrior was no longer in the WWF. However, my hopes were lifted when I read "From The Desk Of . . ." by Stu Saks in the April 1993 issue. I was thrilled to learn that the Warrior will continue to wrestle on the independent circuit.



"I was thinkin' . . . why don't we just join forces and get the idiot who came up with this one?"



Although he's no longer in the WWF, The Ultimate Warrior is wrestling on the independent circuit, which pleases reader Aaron Morales.

Hopefully, after competing with less stress for a while, the Warrior will make a successful move to WCW or even return to the WWF. Whatever he does, I hope it's covered in *PWI*, because I want to continue following this "ultimate" career.

Good luck to you, Warrior, and thanks for a job well done by *PWI*.

AARON MORALES

Clinton, TN

DR. DEATH?

Is there a more incompetent manager in wrestling today than Dr. Harvey Wippleman? Consider the fortunes of the men he has managed since arriving in the WWF.

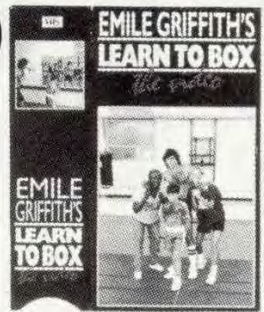
Big Bully Busick, expected to make a big impact upon his arrival in the WWF, never makes it above a mid-level star, and leaves quietly within six months. The Warlord quickly leaves the WWF after signing with Wippleman. Same goes for Sid Justice.

Wippleman should change his name to Dr. Jack Kevorkian: Sign a contract with him, and your career gets hooked up to a suicide machine!

MICHAEL A. VIOLA

Pittsburgh ☐

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PRESS CONFERENCE

(Continued from page 29)



Although he prefers tag teams, Eaton has excelled in singles as well. He held the TV title in 1991 before losing it to "Stunning" Steve Austin. Four months later, he and Austin were stablemates in The Dangerous Alliance.

my partner was Dennis Condrey. When Stan and I won the belts, we won them from Arn and Tully [Blanchard]. But Jim was always there, and so was the intensity, for sure. They hate us, and we hate them. I think Jim hates Rick Morton more than anyone he knows.

PETERS: This feud started in Smoky Mountain and has moved to WCW. Why did you follow Morton and Gibson here?

EATON: Well, Jim didn't take too kindly to Bill Watts declaring The Rock 'n' Roll Express as Smoky Mountain tag team champions, especially af-

ter we won the belts. The fans down here, they'll believe anything you tell 'em. So Jim decided we ought to come down here and set the record straight. When Gibson and Morton balked, we had to lay down the law. (Pauses) Craig, let me explain something to you. The Heavenly Bodies will wrestle anyone, anywhere, anytime, under any circumstances. If we lose, we take our showers and go home. But not recognizing us as champions? That's just not right.

ELLNER: You tell 'em, Bobby.

BERNUCCA: Do you prefer wrestling singles or tag teams? You've had

pretty good success at both.

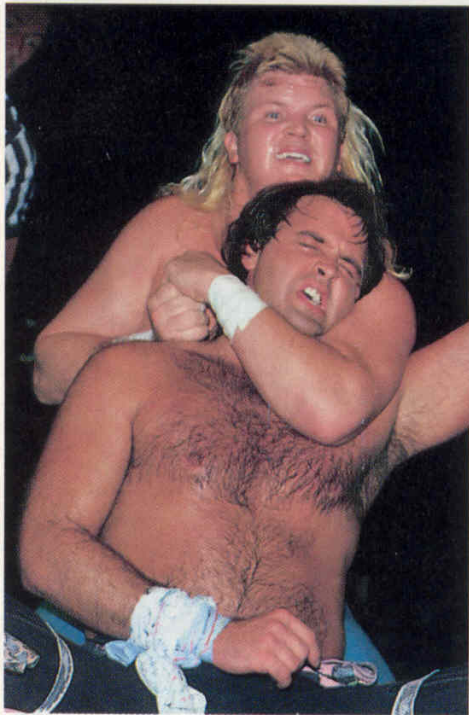
EATON: (slyly) Yeah, I have, haven't I? Actually, I prefer tag teams, probably because that's what I've done most recently. Winning the title with Arn was great, and we were on top for a long time. And helping Stan and Tommy and Jim win the Smoky Mountain belts, that was great, too. After that match, all three of them were telling me how I won the match for us. You don't get that kind of appreciation wrestling singles.

ELLNER: After you dismantle Morton and Gibson, are you going after the WCW tag team champions?

EATON: Maybe.

PETERS: Why not? It seems like the natural next step.

EATON: Jim makes all those decisions. I'd like to take out [Rick] Steamboat and [Shane] Douglas, but there's a team back in Smoky Mountain called The Stud Stable [Robert Fuller and Jimmy Golden] that's making some noise, and Jim might decide to shut them up first.



Eaton, clamping a headlock on Robert Gibson, played a major role in The Heavenly Bodies' SMW title win over The Rock 'n' Roll Express.

ELLNER: That shouldn't take long. Then will you come after Steamboat and Douglas?

EATON: Could be. Ricky's a good wrestler, but I think he's carrying that team. I've never been on a tag team where one wrestler was that much better than his partner.

PETERS: So you perceive Douglas as a weak link?

EATON: Don't you?

BERNUCCA: That remains to be seen. You've been managed by Cornette, and by Paul E. Dangerously. Who's better, and who do you prefer?

EATON: Cornette.

PETERS: Why?

EATON: Well, just look at him. Jim is havin' fun out there. Paul E. was too busy with the money end of it. He was calling business associates during title matches. He never took the time



Eaton, who prefers tag team wrestling to singles, has done battle with Rick Steamboat many times. Eaton respects Steamboat but views his partner, Shane Douglas, as the weak link in their team.

to enjoy what he had. With him, it was always more, more, more. Jim is always hootin' and hollerin'. That's why I don't know if we're gonna come after Steamboat and Douglas, or The Stud Stable, or whatever. Jim will do whatever he thinks will be a fun time for the boys.

ELLNER: Would you leave Cornette if Arn asked you to get back together with him?

EATON: That's a tough question, but

I'll answer it. I still talk to Arn. He's hurt right now, and he understands why I signed up with Jim. I wouldn't blame him for searching out a new partner, and I told him so. If both of us are free, you know we'll be together. But right now, I'm a Heavenly Body.

BERNUCCA: One more question. Would ...

EATON: Sorry, boys. Gotta go. That's enough talking for one day. □

LAWLER-HENNIG

(Continued from page 31)

is a man of the people, while Hennig insulates himself from the public. And Lawler is a fan favorite, while Hennig is a rulebreaker.

Unless, of course, the two men cross paths in the WWF, where Lawler is the rulebreaker and Hennig is the fan favorite.

"I never liked Curt Hennig," said Lawler. "And I'm sure he doesn't care for me much, either. We don't see eye-to-eye on anything. That's the way it's been, the way it is, and the way it's gonna be for a long, long time."

These two men despise each other so much that both find it impossible to share the same locker room. If Hennig is a fan favorite, you can be sure Lawler will be a rulebreaker. And if Lawler assumes his normal role as fan favorite, it's a pretty safe bet that Hennig will be breaking the rules.

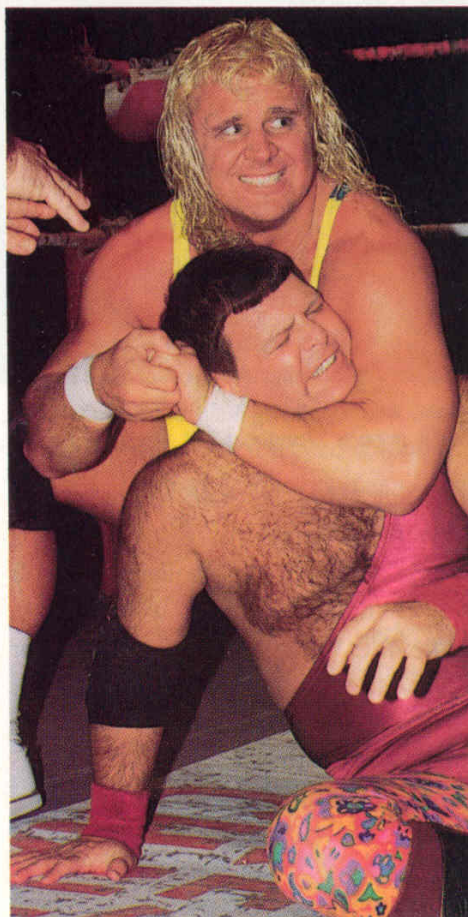
The rancor began in the AWA in 1988, when Lawler defeated Hennig in front of the Memphis faithful for that federation's title. Hennig moved on to the WWF, where he won the I-C title as a rulebreaker. Lawler continued to dominate the USWA as a fan favorite. Late in 1992, Hennig returned to active competition in the WWF as a fan favorite. Lawler immediately replaced Hennig on *WWF Prime Time Wrestling*, assuming a rulebreaker stance. Lawler used much of his air time to verbally assault Hennig.

Verbal became physical at the Royal Rumble in Sacramento, California, on January 24, where Hennig was cheered and Lawler jeered by the Arco Arena crowd as they traded blows during the 30-man main event.

"I was confused," admitted Joel Harmon, a 13-year-old fan from Daly City, California. "I had never seen Jerry Lawler wrestle, but all I had read about him led me to be-



Hennig traps his former AWA foe in the corner (above), then locks up Lawler (below). Hennig clearly wanted to humiliate his longtime enemy.



lieve he was a fan favorite. Then he stepped into the ring at the Royal Rumble and began attacking fan favorites. I didn't understand that at all."

Just eight days later at the Mid-South Coliseum, it was Lawler drawing the cheers, while Hennig was nearly booed out of the building. Although both men had rotated their postures 180 degrees, they were still at opposite poles.

That night, Hennig had received a title shot from Lawler and was making the most of it, gaining a slight upper hand in the early going. Referee Paul Neighbors was accidentally knocked out, giving Hennig the opportunity he needed. He gave Lawler a piledriver, an illegal move in the USWA.

Lawler recovered and retaliated with a piledriver of his own. Neighbors came to and saw Lawler set to administer a second piledriver. The referee warned Lawler that he would lose his

championship belt if he piledrived Hennig.

"The King" ignored the warning and delivered the blow. Neighbors signaled for the bell and the belt, handing the hardware to a dazed Hennig. As the arena crowd cried in protest, referee Frank Morell came to the ring and conferred with Neighbors. When Morell informed Neighbors that Hennig had delivered the first piledriver, Neighbors reversed his decision, returning the belt to Lawler.

Hennig was visibly upset by the decision. Afterward, he revealed to friends that he thought he had been the victim of some hometown officiating.

"Curt said it was just like 1988," said a source close to Hennig, who spoke under the condition of anonymity. "There was no way that the USWA was going to let him come into its backyard and let him take the title away from the federation's fair-haired boy."

Lawler didn't have any sympathy for Hennig's plight.

"Now he knows what it feels like," sneered Lawler. "Does he actually think that stuff didn't go on in the AWA? If you weren't from Minnesota, you didn't have a snowball's chance in hell in that federation."

Although no rematch has been scheduled, it will be interesting to see what transpires should these two meet under the WWF banner. Hennig would have no excuse for losing to Lawler. In fact, Hennig would probably be favored to win the match, despite his lack of success against Lawler throughout his career.

For now, however, the two will continue to agree to disagree. Lawler will remain "The King" of Memphis and the court jester of the WWF. Hennig will be a "perfect" gentleman in the WWF and a cad in the USWA.

Please pass the ketchup. ☐

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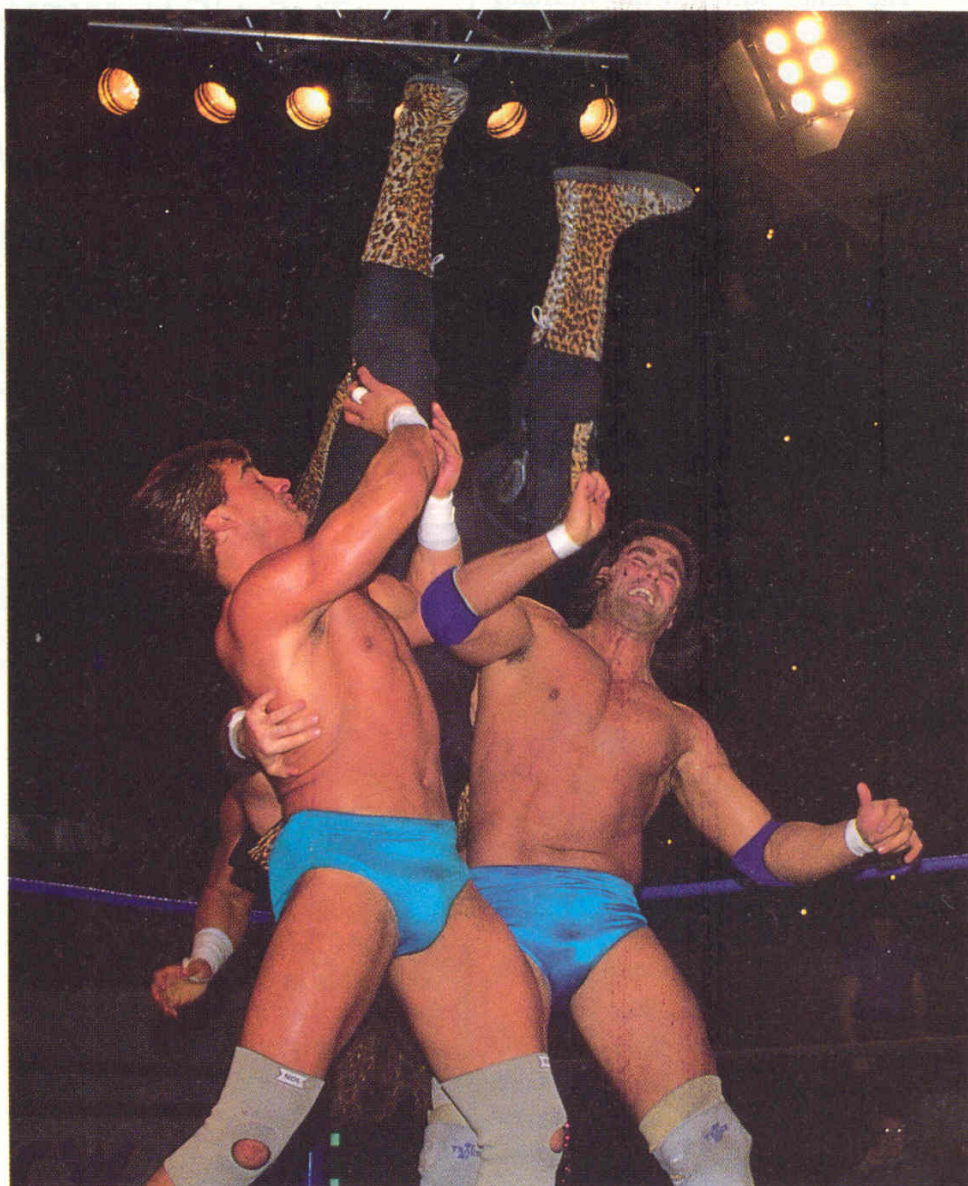
(Continued from page 18)

Gunn was equally proud to have Zenk in his corner. Soon after joining WCW, Gunn, who had done quite well on the independent circuit, met Zenk and they almost immediately began talking about teaming up. They finally did, in November 1992.

From the start, they were intelligent enough to know they would not succeed merely on their good looks. They knew they would have to prove themselves as wrestlers. They did not want to fall into the "pretty boy" trap.

"At first, we did well against Pierce and Slazenger, which was no surprise to us," Gunn offered. "We looked at them as the first hurdle toward bigger and better things."

"We weren't bothered by people who thought we were some-



Zenk and Gunn work well together, but obviously not well enough. They have been criticized for being too soft, an indictment that often accompanies their image as "pretty boys."

how soft because of our appearance," said Zenk. "Those criticisms are never going to go away. What we had to do was concentrate on was getting the kind of matches that would allow us to show our stuff."

The turning point to the current situation came in January at Clash of the Champions XXII, when they faced The Wrecking Crew, who were making their WCW debut. Zenk and Gunn as a team had never faced Rage and Fury.

"They looked mean, but not too threatening," said Gunn. "I felt it would be a tough match, but I

wasn't worried. I didn't feel worried at all."

Had they been worried, they might have won.

The loss was a devastating setback, like a sharp pin bursting the team's balloon of confidence. They are scrambling to recover, but it seems the harder they try to get out of their slump, the deeper they slump. The worst part of it is, they don't have an answer.

"I wish I had one," Zenk pondered. "I really wish I had one. Is the answer for us to work harder? We're doing that. Is the answer for us to figure out more strategies? We're doing that, too."

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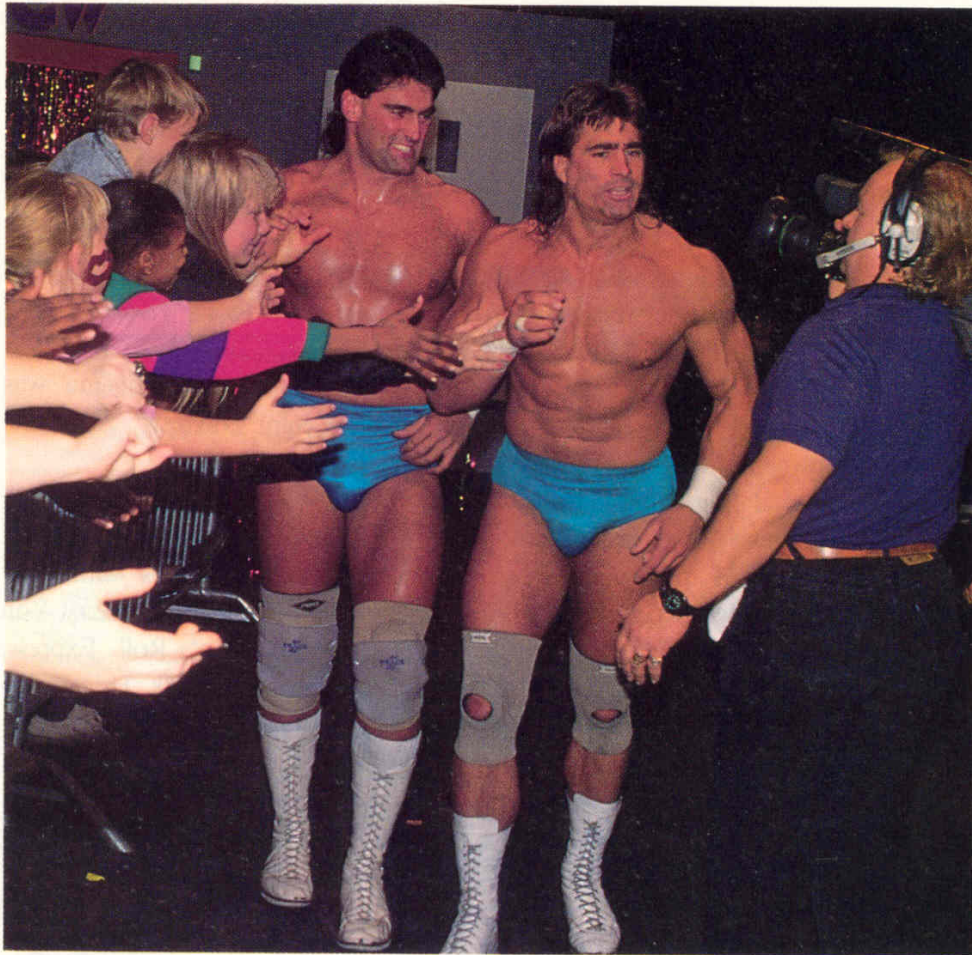
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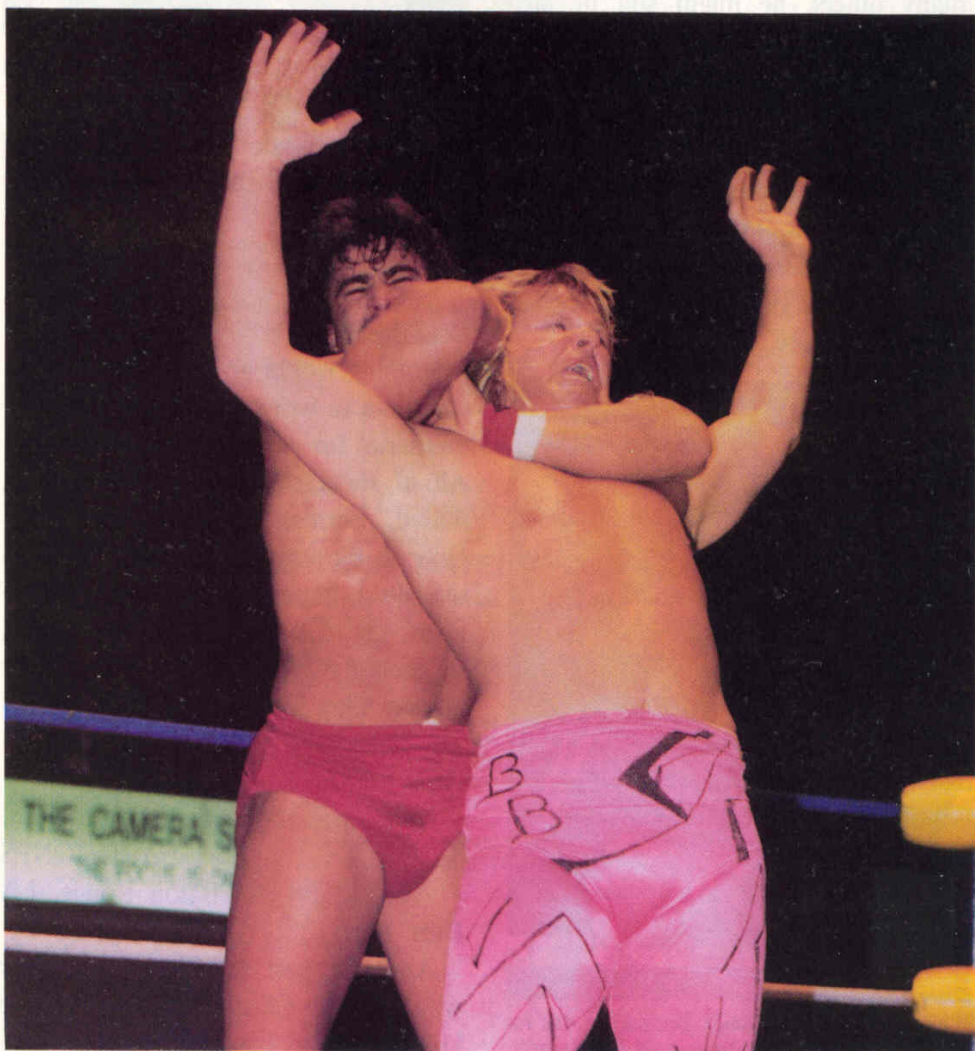
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Zenk and Gunn are popular with the fans (above). However, popularity doesn't necessarily translate into success. Zenk (below) won the TV title in 1990 but hasn't returned to that level of greatness.



"Here's a problem," Gunn interjected. "Too often, we're assigned to singles matches. We can't regain any momentum as a team if we're not a team. We need a regular schedule of tag bouts."

Neither man appears to lack self-assurance. The reassessment has not shaken their confidence. They want to remain a team. They even continue to insist a World championship is not an impossible dream.

"There is absolutely no reason to give up now," Zenk said. "Johnny and I feel that this is a just a problem, and problems get solved."

However, who's going to wait for them? Certainly not the match-makers, who are sure to increase their singles bouts as their tag losses mount. Not their fans, who are already becoming impatient for them to do *something* positive.

These guys are going to have to split up if they want to save their careers. Take a six-month break as a team. That should be long enough. By then, they may want to wrestle as singles, or find new partners.

The promise is still there.

Have you picked up a copy of *Wrestling 93: Rulebreaker* yet? If you have, then you already know the publication is the dream-come-true of "Off The Top Rope" columnist Eddie Ellner, who has requested that I not contribute to the new venture. Ellner thinks I'm too biased toward fan favorites. He may be right, though he is clearly biased toward rulebreakers (he calls that "objectivity").

Even if Ellner had invited me, I would have said no. I was against the premise behind 93 from the day it was proposed. A magazine completely controlled by rulebreakers and those who support them is in no one's best interest.

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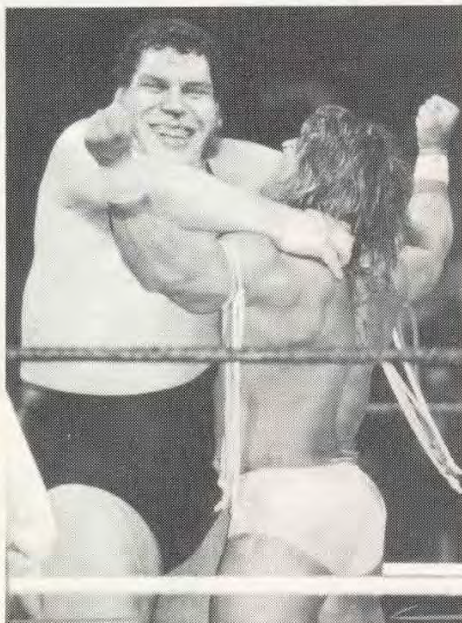
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OFF THE TOP ROPE

(Continued from page 20)

Dear Susie,

Andre's last U.S. appearance occurred at last September's Clash of Champions, where he greeted fans on crutches. In December, he wrestled for the last time, hobbling into the ring to team with Baba in Japan. At the time of his death, Andre was preparing for yet another comeback. His slowly deteriorating medical condition strongly suggested retirement 10 years ago—yet, at the insistence of promoters who craved the box office his name created—and his own fatal infatuation with the limelight—he plodded on way past his prime. If, God forbid, I am stricken with a disease that makes it unhealthy and dangerous for me to write, I might resist retirement, too. Or I might take up gardening and live another 25 years. My conscience rests in peace knowing that, had Andre followed my advice and the advice of many others, he might still be alive today. I didn't slay the Giant, though I remain a convenient scapegoat. His public did. Which is why, Susie, if you look out your window, you'll notice a detective making his way to your door. Susie Jameson, you are under arrest for the murder of Andre the Giant. You have the right to remain silent. I suggest you use it.



Why was this man smiling? Because he was far past his prime and still being paid handsomely.

Dear Eddie the Giant Idiot,

What have you got to say for yourself now?

PAUL COHEN
New York

Dear Paul,

How did you know magenta was my favorite color crayon?

Dear Eddie,

Let this be a lesson to you. It's not too late to make amends with your other targets. Apologize to Kerry Von Erich, The Rock 'n' Roll Express, Dusty Rhodes, and Hulk Hogan be-



For the utterly foolish Rick Morton and Robert Gibson, we can only hope for a cruel ending.

fore it's too late. Then again, you might go before them. Then we can party.

DELILIA KERN
Bangor, ME

Dear Delilia,

Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to write heartfelt professional obituaries for each of the men you list. All of them should retire, or remain retired, permanently from the ring. Only in the case of Morton and Gibson do I hope for a crueler punishment, say, a latent case of elephantitis, so each day when they look in their mirrors they look just like you.

Dear Eddie,

Andre was the best. You are scum.

EARL JONES
Baton Rouge, LA

Dear Earl,

And the best to your sister, your wife. What? Of course. Should have known they're the same person. ☐

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FROM THE DESK OF

(Continued from page 12)



Brutus Beefcake can certainly dish it out, but can he take it? "The Barber" has returned to the ring after sitting out nearly two years.

center of the face. They also happen to be at the base of the brain."

In his discussions with Beefcake, Dr. Habal surely considered the fact that his patient was not returning to normal activity. Blows to the face are common in wrestling and the men delivering the blows are not normal men. Still, the doctor says there is virtually no chance of reinjuring the face to the degree it was injured in 1990.

"It's almost impossible to break it like that again," Dr. Habal said. "It broke like an eggshell. The human hand could not possibly produce the same volume of speed and impact."

Physics aside, there is no guarantee that Beefcake won't reinjure himself. Even though an opponent cannot create the type of force that the impact of the parasailer's knees created a 25 miles per hour, I am more concerned with the cumulative effect of the attacks he surely faces in the future. Wrestlers are not known to be shy about attacking an area where an opponent has suffered an injury. If it is to an opponent's advantage to attack Beefcake's face, that is precisely what he will do. It will be

up to Beefcake to protect himself. All the referee can be expected to do is enforce the rules.

As a rule, professional athletes do not know when to call it quits. There must be a chemical inside their brains that renders them incapable of deciding when is the best time for them to get out. I have seen those who waited so long to retire that their old-age performances tarnished rich memories of their better years. I have applauded those whose philosophy was that they'd rather get out one year too early than one year too late, only to see them renounce their retirements—and get out five years too late.

Brutus Beefcake's decision was made for him on July 4, 1990. As much damage as was caused that day, I guess the chemical that prevents an athlete from thinking clearly enough to retire—I mean *really* retire—was not altered.

Medical science was able to get him back to the point where he felt secure enough to come back. And medical science will be there for him if he should need them again.

"If it breaks," Dr. Habal said, "we'll fix it."

I only hope that if the need arises, he'll be as fortunate a second time around. □

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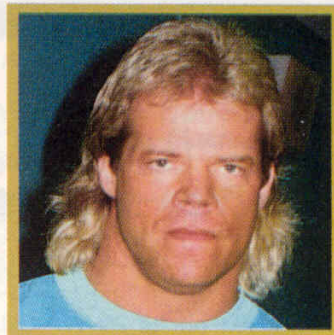
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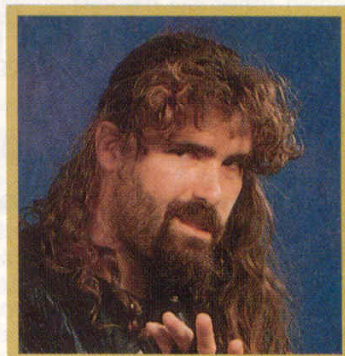
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KAMALA

(Continued from page 49)

Ware the other two times. His handler during that time, Friday, said the "Ugandan Giant" had virtually no appreciation of his situation.

"I honestly don't even think Kamala *knew* he was champion most of the time," Friday offered. "He barely acknowledged having the belt strapped around his waist. Now, it appears as though Slick has some sort of sway over him, but I don't believe Slick can actually teach him how to be a champion."

"When I won the title back from Kamala," said Lawler, "he acted like I was stealing some sort of shiny, new toy. There's the key word, a *toy*. He didn't treat the championship with the proper respect, I felt."

The majority of wrestlers grow up dreaming about a world title. It is the ultimate goal, the crowning achievement. Kamala didn't grow up with such dreams. He knew little about wrestling, or other sports. Or, for that matter, other fields of endeavor. He was raised in an environment where day-to-day survival was the only real concern. This *survival of the fittest* made Kamala strong, but it didn't make him care.

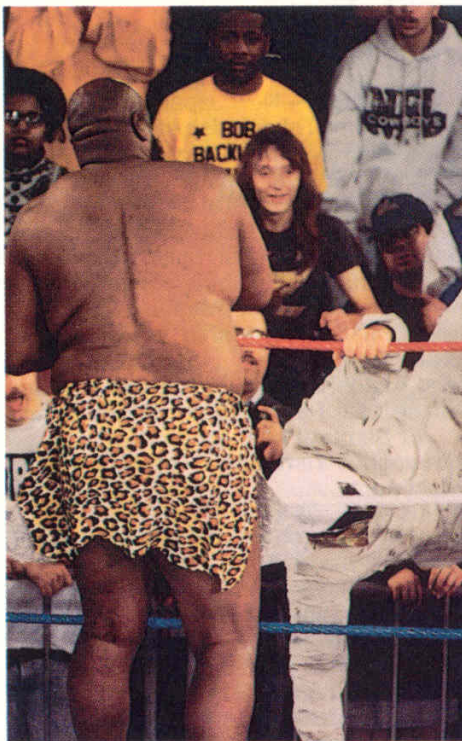
That brings up another vital question. First of all, is there really a "new" Kamala? And if there is, how different is he from the old one?

"Psychologically, he may be a human being, but mentally he's an animal," said one wrestler who has met Kamala in the ring recently, before he hooked up with Slick. "I don't see anything different about him. He's as brutal as ever. How does the old saying go; I wouldn't trust him as far as I could throw him. Good luck, Slick."

"The other day I saw Kamala in the locker room tearing into some food like an animal," said another foe. "He didn't look very civilized to me. Now I know table manners aren't exactly at the top of Slick's



In the USWA, Kamala twice beat Jerry Lawler (above) for the title, but may not have realized the significance of the belt. Recently, he has attacked Kim Chee, his former handler (below).



list of priorities, but it looks to be an indication the work is far from done."

Slick's defenders say the preacher definitely has changed Kamala for the better. Which is why, they conclude, dreams of a championship are not ridiculous.

"They've already come a long, long way in their efforts together," said one close friend. "It was a crime what Harvey Wippleman did to Kamala. He tried to make him

more brutal than ever. Slick is close to reversing the damage."

Slick is seeking the best for Kamala, the "new" Kamala. He realizes the path will be arduous, but he also knows his man at least is capable of defeating the WWF's top wrestlers, men like World champion Bret Hart, Intercontinental champion Shawn Michaels, and their challengers.

"Kamala easily rates favorably against anyone," said one former WWF star who now competes in WCW. "He should have no problem against them. Of course, he's no master of science, or a thoughtful technician. One thing he does do well is follow orders, and Slick knows more about the sport than you might think. I'm sure he would have Kamala ready for any contingency."

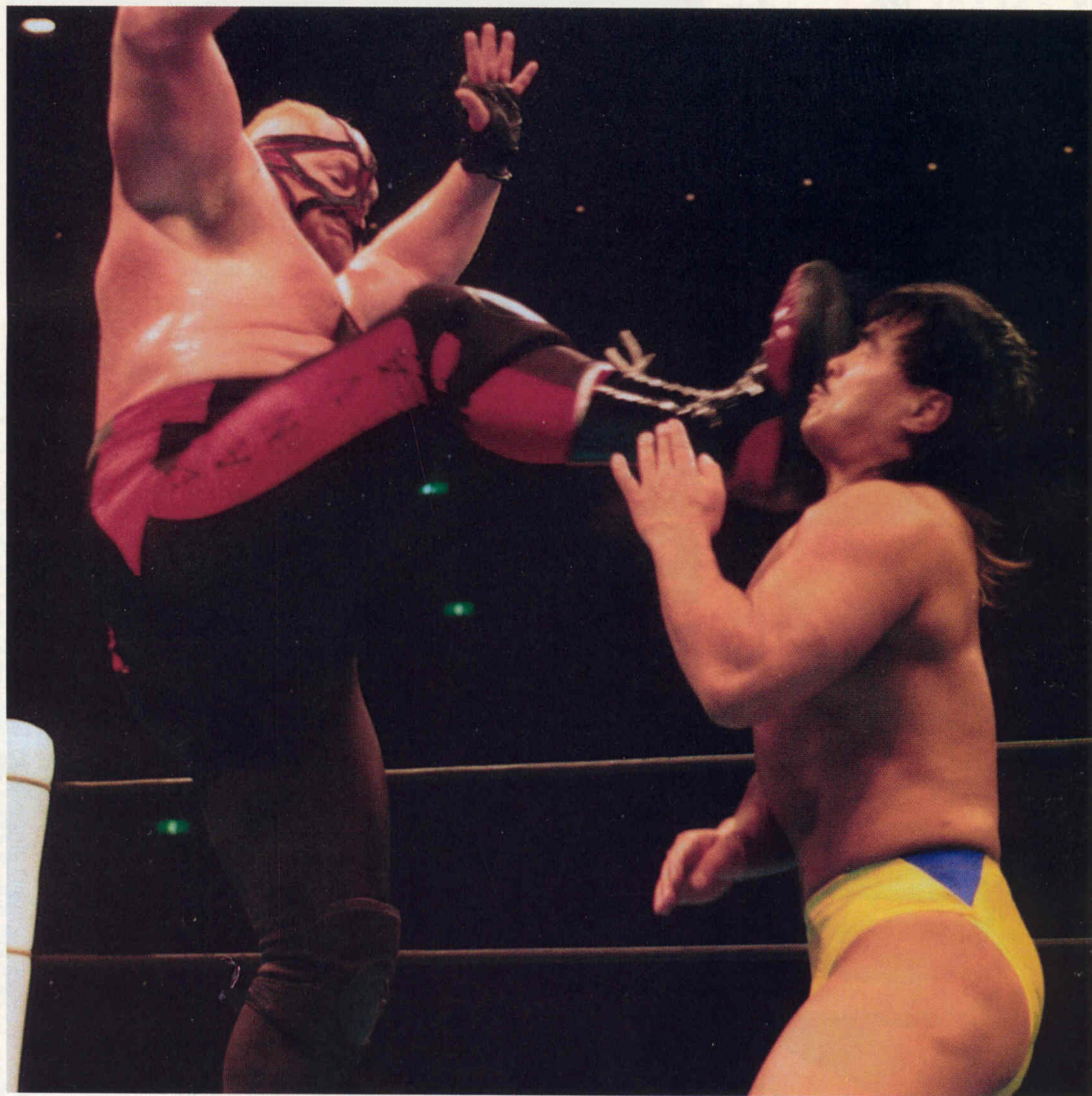
Ultimately, it is all very simple. If Kamala defeats the World champion, he *becomes* the World champion. Questions of conduct are important, but what matters more to most fans today—as countless rule-breaking champions have taught us—is holding on to the belt.

Be fair to Kamala, Slick is saying. Give him a chance. He's a nice guy, really, if you just get to know him. He'll be a champion of whom you can be proud.

If he ever gets that far. □

HARLEY RACE

(Continued from page 34)



yesterday's Doublemint."

"I don't know how Vader can get any *more* aggressive," said Sting, "but he's surprised me plenty before, and I'd be stupid to underestimate him in any way in the future. This is absolutely a dangerous situation we're talking about here. Race, for all his slimy qualities, does put a few checks and balances in place where Vader is concerned. Well, he used to, any-

Vader's violent ways are known worldwide. He is most dangerous when he is most angry.

way. But Vader—well, he's worse than ever, and getting worse all the time, it seems.

"You know," Sting added, "it's like the Alex Karras character, Mongol, in *Blazing Saddles*. Like Gene Wilder says in the movie: 'Don't shoot him, you'll only make him angry.' Well, Vader is angry. Not only at me, but apparently at

Race, too. An angry Vader is a dangerous Vader, and he's angrier these days than he's ever been before."

And getting angrier still. And if Vader finally does make a clean break from Race, those violent emotions swirling within that powerful 450-pound frame will be raging unchecked with only one sadistic focus:

Every fan favorite in WCW. □

60 WEAR-DOWN HOLDS

1. AIRPLANE SPIN
2. ARMBAR
3. ARMDRAG
4. ARMLOCK
5. ARM STRETCH
6. ARM WHIP
7. ASIAN SPIKE
8. BEAR HUG
9. BITING
10. BODY SLAM
11. BODY TACKLE
12. CHICKEN WING
13. CHOKE
14. CLAW
15. CLOTHESLINE
16. CROSS BODY BLOCK
17. DOUBLE-AXE HANDLE
18. DROP KICK
19. EAGLE SPLIT
20. ELBOW SMASH
21. EYE GOUGE
22. FACE RAKE
23. FIREMAN'S CARRY RAM
24. FLYING BODY PRESS
25. FLYING CLOTHESLINE
26. FLYING DROP KICK
27. FLYING ELBOW DROP
28. FLYING HEAD BUTT
29. FLYING MARE
30. FOREARM SMASH
31. FOREIGN OBJECT
32. FULL NELSON
33. GIANT SWING
34. GRAPEVINE
35. HAIR PULLING
36. HAMMERLOCK
37. HEAD LOCK
38. HEAD STOMP
39. HEART PUNCH
40. HIP ROLL
41. IRISH WHIP
42. KNEE DROP
43. LEGLOCK
44. MANAGER INTERFERENCE
45. MONKEY FLIP
46. OVERHEAD TOSS
47. POLE RAM
48. REVERSE CHINLOCK
49. ROLLING SCISSORS
50. ROPE BURN
51. SAVATTE KICK
52. SCISSORS GRIP
53. SHOULDER BREAKER
54. SLINGSHOT
55. SNAP MARE
56. STEP-OVER TOE HOLD
57. SUPLEX
58. SURFBOARD
59. TURNBUCKLE SMASH
60. WRISTLOCK

30 SET-UP HOLDS

61. ABDOMINAL STRETCH
62. ATOMIC DROP
63. AVALANCHE
64. BACKBREAKER
65. BACKROLL PRESS
66. BELLY TO BELLY
67. BIG SPLASH
68. BOSTON CRAB
69. BRAIN BUSTER
70. BULLDOG
71. CAMEL CLUTCH
72. COBRA CLUTCH
73. CRADLE
74. CRUCIFIX
75. D.D.T.
76. FIGURE FOUR
77. FLYING LEG DROP
78. GOURD BUSTER
79. INDIAN DEATH LOCK
80. NECKBREAKER
81. PILEDRIVER
82. POWER BOMB
83. POWER SLAM
84. RUSSIAN SICKLE
85. SLEEPER
86. SLINGSHOT SUPLEX
87. SMALL PACKAGE
88. SPINE BUSTER
89. SUNSET FLIP
90. SUPERPLEX

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I wish to join

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☐ ACTIVE LEAGUE

☐ NO PREFERENCE

WRESTLER'S NAME (NO ACTUAL PRO WRESTLER NAMES, PLEASE) _____

WRESTLER'S HEIGHT _____

WRESTLER'S WEIGHT _____

MANAGER'S NAME (IF NOT YOU) _____

WRESTLER'S SPECIAL GIMMICK _____

PW10693

Wear-Down Holds: choose 10 from the list of 60 shown at left. List them in order. Use each only once.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____

Set-Up Holds: choose 5 from the list of 30 shown at left. List them in order. Use each only once.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

Finishing Hold: create "custom" final maneuver or choose a hold from either list shown at left. Limit the length to 20 letters and spaces:

FINISHING HOLD _____

★★★★★ WRESTLING ★★★★★

ENQUILERA

MISSY HYATT RETURNS TO MANAGING!

Commentator To Lead Barbarian

By BOB SMITH

GAINESVILLE, GA.—In an unexpected development, WCW commentator Missy Hyatt has opted to return to the managerial ranks for the first time in nearly four years. Hyatt, who formerly managed Eddie Gilbert, John Tatum, and Rick and Scott Steiner, announced that she has signed The Barbarian to a contract.

After leading the powerful Barbarian to victory over young T.A. McCoy during a television taping in February, Hyatt announced that she would be at ringside for many of Barbarian's future bouts.

"I guess you could call us 'Beauty And The Beast'!" said Hyatt, whose last managerial stint was leading the Steiner brothers in 1989. "Everytime I looked at Barbarian, I saw a man who possessed all the physical skills, but who constantly was hanging around with the wrong people. Well, Barbarian has a score to settle with Paul Orndorff, and I'm just the woman to lead him into victory against that turncoat 'Mr. Blunderful.'"

Barbarian's previous mentor, Cactus Jack, seemed pleased about Barbarian's choice of manager.

"Hey, you can tell that Missy knows a lot about wrestling" just by listening to her segments on *WCW Main Event*," said the crazed New Mexican. "I'm real busy right now fighting Orndorff and other scum, and I can't always be by Barb's side. I can't think of another person whose side I'd rather be next to than Missy's... well, you know what I mean."



WCW commentator Missy Hyatt, who once managed Sting and Eddie Gilbert, is returning to ringside to guide The Barbarian.



The Metal Maniac has been a world traveler lately, wrestling throughout Europe.

By ANDY RODRIGUEZ
DUBLIN, IRELAND—Who is wrestling's busiest man? It may be rookie The Metal Maniac, who competed in IWCCW, Global, ECW, the WWA, and in independent federations in Utah and Texas during 1992. In January, the war-painted ruffian engaged in a whirlwind tour of several countries, including Ireland, England, Austria, and Germany.

"I know I have a way to go, but I want to be one of the best wrestlers in the world," said the gruff-voiced Maniac, who received more than 900 votes in the 1992 *PWJ* Rookie of the Year voting. "I figure the best way to do that is to take on matches anywhere I can get 'em. So that's what I'm doing, and I know I'm doing the right thing. I'm gonna be a champion somewhere by the end of this year."

By DAVE ROSENBAUM

JELLICO, TN—The Smoky Mountain TV title changed hands in one night, passing from Tracey Smothers to The Nightstalker, and later from Nightstalker to Tim Horner. However, the cruel actions of SMW champion "Dirty White Boy" Tony Anthony during Smothers' loss were all fans could talk about.

As Smothers approached the ring for his match against Nightstalker, Anthony sneak-attacked Smothers by blasting him in right shoulder with a metal chair. Anthony also interfered throughout the bout, and that factor combined with the injured shoulder made Smothers easy prey for Nightstalker's pinfall victory.

Following the pinfall, Anthony again stormed the ring, kicked at Smothers' shoulder, and handcuffed Smothers to the top rope. After cutting up Smothers' "rebel" flag with scissors, Anthony brought a garbage can into the ring, put the ripped flag in the can, and lit



"Dirty White Boy" Tony Anthony lived up to his nickname against SMW foe Tracey Smothers.

the flag ablaze with lighter fluid. Anthony was fined \$1,000 for the attack.

"That'll be cheap compared to what I take out of him," an angry Smothers warned.

Finkel, Wippleman 'Wrestle'

By CRAIG PETERS

MEMPHIS—For months, manager Harvey Wippleman insulted ring announcer Howard Finkel during WWF several times that Wippleman should keep his mouth shut. These two non-wrestlers finally decided to square off, but not in a WWF arena: They battled to a no-contest on February 8 at the Mid-South Coliseum here.

"Well, yeah, it might have been the worst wrestling match I ever saw in my whole life," said USWA star Dan Davis. "But these days, with guys like

Tod Gordon, Dennis Corraluzzo, and other officials stepping in the ring, who is to tell these guys not to get in there and fight it out?"

Surprisingly, Wippleman, who is still known in Memphis as Downtown Bruno, gained the majority of cheers against the ring announcer.

"Hey, my hometown fans know greatness when they see it," said Bruno following the match. "I'm tired of Finkel and his big mouth. Who knows? A while back, I told Kamala to attack Finkel, and the African nearly killed him. Maybe I'll get Giant Gonzales to get the job done right!"

AROUND THE GLOBE

CHIBA, JAPAN

Steve Williams and Terry Gordy may no longer be a steady team in the United States, but they remain the most dominant duo in Japan. "Dr. Death" and "Bam Bam" regained the PWF and International tag team titles from Mitsuhiro Misawa and Toshiaki Kawada on January 30 here. They earned the match by soundly defeating another American team, Stan Hansen and Johnny Ace. "Please tell WCW fans we're still as tough as ever," said Gordy. "Hey, if we were still in the U.S., you know we'd be the champions in WCW—or anywhere."

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

The WWF held a press conference on January 26 here to announce that Genichiro Tenryu, one of the most popular grapplers in Japan, would be making appearances in the federation both at WrestleMania IX and at cards before and after the pay-per-view event. The WWF will also continue to send talent to Japan, and now has reached an agreement with WAR organization. "The continued trading of talent by all organizations around the globe can only be good for the sport," said Tenryu in the days before his WrestleMania opponent was announced.

CALGARY, ALBERTA

A new federation, Rocky Mountain, has begun to present cards in this Canadian city, long a hotbed for mat action. The federation featured the first barbed wire match in Calgary history on January 29, as champion Beef Wellington defeated Chris Jericho. Other RMW stars include Lance Storm, The Atomic Punk, Firebreaker Chip, Jason the Terrible, and Steve Disalvo.

HOT SHOT



Watch out, first row ringsiders! For weeks, the WWF claimed that 505-pound Yokozuna could not be taken off his feet, but this "Hot Shot" proves otherwise. The WWF World champion Bret Hart somehow found the resolve—and the strength—to toss the sumo-trained rulebreaker over the top rope and to the floor during the "Hitman's" first title bout against the huge WWF newcomer. It was reported by several fans that the thud that resulted when all that dead weight hit the floor was likened to that of a sonic boom . . . only just a bit louder!

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